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Allegiances

[image]

LightningClan

Leader:

Nettlestar - White tom with gray flecks and green eyes

Deputy:

Stoneheart - Gray tom with green eyes

Warriors:

Rocktuft - Brown tabby tom with gray muzzle and chest with yellow eyes

Thistlestorm - Gray tabby tom with blue eyes and a dead foot

Twigwhisper - Brown she-cat with gray eyes

Featherwing - Silver tabby and white she-cat with blue eyes

Yang - White tom with a black spot over eyes / green eyes

Willowfoot - White she-cat with gray paws and blue eyes

Bouncestep - Black tom with yellow eyes

Medicine Cat:

Flowerstorm - Calico she-cat with green eyes

Apprentices:

Pikepaw - Red-brown tabby tom with green eyes [Mentor:

Bouncestep]

Queens:

Yellowgaze - Black she-cat with white splotches and yellow eyes (carrying Stoneheart's kits)

Elders:

Blossomheart - Tortoiseshell she-cat with blue eyes

BreezeClan

Leader:

Pebblestar - Gray she-cat with gray eyes

Deputy:

Redspots - White tom with red-brown spots and green eyes

Warriors:

Waterdrop - Blue-gray she-cat with green eyes

Voleheart - Large brown tom with amber eyes

Eaglecry - Gray she-cat with blue eyes

Medicine Cat:

Cloudheart - White long-furred tom with green eyes

Queens:

Birdjaw - Light gray she-cat with blue eyes (Nursing Owlstar's kits) [Foxkit - orange she-cat with gray eyes. Hollykit - black she-cat with brown eyes]

Elders:

Mothsplash - Light brown long-legged tom with amber eyes.

RainClan

Leader:

Cavestar - Blue-gray tom with gray eyes

Deputy:

Whitescar - White tom with scar across back, green eyes

Warriors:

Flailwhisper - Light gray she-cat with yellow eyes

Tallwatcher - Black tom with white muzzle and chest, long legs with green eyes

Splashstream - White she-cat with gray eyes

Crashclaw - Light gray tom with amber eyes

Medicine Cat:

Duskwaters - Tortoiseshell tom with green eyes

Apprentices:

Brackenpaw - Bracken-colored tabby tom; amber eyes [Mentor: Tallwatcher]

Slatepaw - Gray she-cat with green eyes [Mentor: Splashstream]

Rabbitpaw - Cream tom with gray eyes [Mentor: Crashclaw]

Elders:

Oakclaw - Bracken tabby tom with amber eyes [Forced into elders' den because he was mentally injured]

GloomClan

Leader:

Emberstar - Pale flame-colored she-cat with blue eyes

Deputy :

Adderblaze - Brown tom with amber eyes

Warriors:

Breezegorse - Black tom with green eyes

Hazelscar - Sand colored she-cat with green eyes and a scar across her neck

Bramblenose - Brown tabby tom with green eyes

Brindletooth - Brindle tabby she-cat with yellow eyes

Medicine Cat:

Littlestorm - Light gray tom with gray eyes

Medicine Cat Apprentice:

Sparrowpaw - Brown tabby she-cat with yellow eyes

Apprentices:

Ravenpaw - Long-furred black tom with amber eyes [Mentor: Adderblaze]

Smokepaw - Long-furred gray tom with lighter gray streaks; amber eyes [Mentor: Breezegorse]

Shadowpaw - Long-furred black tom with yellow eyes [Mentor: Hazelscar]

Bumblepaw - Brindle tabby she-cat with green eyes [Mentor: Bramblenose]

Elders:

Tigerdusk - Dark gray tabby tom with amber eyes

NightClan

Leader:

Sal-inja: Black tom with green eyes and darker markings across pelt

Warriors:

Scar - Brown tom with scar from above eye to tail base; yellow eyes

Torn - Dark brown tom with white underbelly and paws; gray eyes and torn ears/half deaf

Lion - Sal-inja's favorite, very furry lion-colored tom with brown eyes

Claw - Black and white spotted tom with green eyes and long claws

Fire - Flame-colored she-cat with brown eyes

Scream - Brown, old tom with gray eyes, probably the best fighter and most blood-hungry warrior in NightClan

Panther - Black she-cat, very light-pawed and uses her attractiveness to trick toms in battle, green eyes

Tiger - Broad-shouldered, light brown tabby with amber eyes and 3 scars over right eye

Apprentices:

Torch - Light brown tom with one yellow eye and one brown eye [Mentor: Tiger]

Needle - Dark gray she-cat with black spots and needle-like green eyes [Mentor: Panther]

New Additions (Cats who abandoned their Clans):

Crowstream - Black tom with amber eyes [Trained by Claw] (Formerly LightningClan)

Larkstrike - Pale yellow tabby she-cat with gray eyes [Trained by

Scar] (Formerly LightningClan)

Owlstar - Brown tom with yellow eyes [Trained by Scream] (Formerly BreezeClan)

Snowberry (Soot) - White she-cat with amber eyes [Trained by Fire] (Formerly LightningClan)

Note to Readers

[image]

I do not own the Warriors franchise

I do not own the pictures shown at the top of each chapter

Books in Chronological Order:

In the Shadows - Beginning Super Edition

The Thistle and the Feather - Volume 1 of Arc 1

The Darkness Rising - Volume 2 of Arc 1

The Last Battle - Volume 3 of Arc 1

??? - Volume 1 of Arc 2

This is purely a fanfiction based off of the original Warriors series.
If you actually read this, I praise you, my child.

Any feedback and constructive criticism are accepted!

Thanks for reading and please, enjoy the book.

Prologue

[image]

"StarClan, stand your ground!" A black tom hissed.

"Crowstar," A furry gray tom muttered, "You know we have no chance."

Crowstar's black fur bristled in the snowy wind, "But we have to try."

The gray tom mumbled to himself and went to sit with the other medicine cats, waiting to heal future injuries.

An icy-white she-cat kneaded her claws into the ground, "I will fight for what the Dark Forest and NightClan did to me."

A pale yellow tom with brown eyes and bulky shoulders stood beside her, "I'm not of LightningClan anymore, but I created them and will give my soul to save them."

Crowstar nodded his head, "You've always been brave, Lightningstar."

Lightningstar blinked at Crowstar then called out to all the other StarClan cats, "Get ready, they're coming!"

A sleek-furred gray she-cat ran in front, "I will lead us to victory."

Lightningstar purred, "Rainstar you've always been so full of yourself," his expression turned serious, "But we've no time for that, look."

On the horizon, where darkness was eating the light, Lurking Shadow, Whisper, and Moon were walking towards them. StarClan has lost the power to keep them off their grounds. Behind them were the dark forms of other cats who died in hatred or in evil.

Crowstar growled.

Lurking Shadow twitched his whiskers, "You see you're outnumbered."

"No, I do not see the chance of failure. What I see is my opponent. I see a young tom who was accidentally led the wrong way, a cat who was taken in and raised by evil, and I see you. A tom who had a curiosity for power that went too far," Crowstar stepped forward, "Whether we lose or not, StarClan won't let you win."

"We'll see about that," Lurking Shadow chuckled. He paused - he twitched his ear.

Lightningstar thought it was funny how one signal could create so many yowling. He didn't have time to dwell on it. Lurking Shadow was on top of him in the blink of an eye.

"I'll make your star above your tree disappear forever!" Shadow snarled.

Lightningstar hissed and bat his hind legs, throwing the tom a few tail-lengths away. But he seemed only to be unbalanced.

"Fool," Shadow growled and his spirit dissolved into nothing. Lightningstar looked around confused. Suddenly, razor sharp claws raked his cheek and he was on the ground.

Lightningstar didn't waste time. He bit Lurking Shadow's neck, making sure he had a grip, and threw him off. He ran over to where Shadow was struggling to stand up and knocked him down again, pinning him to the ground. Lightningstar dug his claws into Shadow's flanks, Shadow yowled in agony, trying desperately to get Lightningstar off of him.

"I may not be as nimble as you, but I'm definitely heavier," Lightningstar laughed and brought his claws over Shadow's eye. He scratched his opponent's underbelly, blood flowed onto the starry ground. Lurking Shadow's eyes started to roll up, the tom struggled to stay focused.

Lightningstar grinned, finally, he would kill the leader of darkness and end this! But no, the fates didn't want that. Moon knocked

Lightningstar off of Shadow and leaped on top of him.

"I couldn't have you kill my leader now could I?" Moon laughed, "Thought we were this easy to defeat?"

Lightningstar looked to see a crowd of about a dozen StarClan cats by the medicine cats. He growled and gave all his force to his hind legs. Moon screeched in pain as he flew ten tail-lengths away. Lightningstar stood up, blood dripped down one of his forelegs. He ran off to find a new opponent.

A broad-shouldered brown tabby with gray eyes was fighting off a Dark Forest tom. He sank his claws into the tom's throat and his spirit was frozen in agony for a moment, then it dissolved into nothing.

He looked around for the cat he was named after. His mother had named him after Lurking Shadow, in remembrance of his good side. Shadow grimaced, he would make sure that tom died while realizing the mistake he made.

"Looking for me?" A voice whispered.

Out of reflex, Shadow whipped around, his claws met flesh. With surprise, he realized that he actually knocked Lurking Shadow to the ground. The surprise didn't last long. Lurking Shadow got up with ease and tackled Shadow to the ground. For a while, they were a flurry of fur and claws. Shadow could feel his flesh rip apart by his opponent's claws. Although it hurt, Shadow kept fighting, triumphant when his claws met flesh.

Then claws hit his throat and underbelly.

Shadow gasped. Lurking Shadow got off of him and licked his blood-red claws, "Hmmph, seems like a win to me. Dark Forest, retreat! We have won!"

Dawn and Hawk along with Echodusk and Crag ran over to him, they were yowling words that Shadow couldn't comprehend. Other cats rushed over. He could feel herbs being put in his mouth, but he didn't have the strength to chew them. Pain traveled all the way to

his limbs. He couldn't move anymore.

Dawn intertwined her tail with his, "Shadow..." she whispered.

And that was the last thing he heard before his essence dissolved into the air. His body floated away and then he felt nothing but freedom. And eventually, even his thoughts disappeared.

Shadow became the air that they breathed. He wasn't gone completely, just gone in form.

Dawn buckled to the ground, crying, "We've lost him twice now."

Hawk sat down, "Curse them."

Crowstar brushed his paw through the starry grass that Shadow had died on. Little specks of stardust floated up into the air, "May we remember Shadow for the moons to come. He fought bravely in life and in spirit. Now he lives through us."

"Shadow!" The StarClan cats cheered in sadness. His name rang through the air, celebrating his existence.

~Chapter One~

[image]

"Let all cats gather beneath the High Rock for a Clan meeting!" Nettlestar stood on top of the High Rock. Leafbare came a few days ago, a light snowfall drifted from the sky.

The breeze rustled Thistlestorm's fur as he and Featherwing came to join the others beneath the High Rock. Bouncestep and Pikepaw sat off to one side. Thistlestorm realized how old Pikepaw was. His warrior ceremony was long overdue.

"Pikepaw, please come up on the High Rock," Nettlestar looked down at the red-brown tabby.

Pikepaw bunched his haunches and jumped on the boulder next to Nettlestar, his eyes gleamed with pride.

"I, Nettlestar, leader of LightningClan, call upon my warrior ancestors to look down on this apprentice. He has trained hard to understand the ways of your noble code, and I commend him to you as a warrior in his turn," Nettlestar brushed his tail over Pikepaw's back, "Pikepaw, do you promise to uphold the warrior code and to protect and defend your Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Pikepaw stood taller, "I will do whatever it takes to protect my Clan. I do."

Nettlestar twitched his whiskers, "Then by the powers of StarClan, I give you your warrior name. Pikepaw, from this moment you will be known as Pikeleap. StarClan honors your courage and determination, and we welcome you as a full warrior of LightningClan. You will have your warrior vigil tonight," Nettlestar licked the top of Pikeleap's head.

"Pikeleap! Pikeleap! Pikeleap!" The Clan cheered.

Thistlestorm was proud of Pikeleap. The extra training he

received did no harm surely. All it could've done was make him a better warrior. Thistlestorm was only a couple few moons older than Pikeleap, and they weren't that close, but he couldn't help but be proud of Pikeleap as if he had been his mentor.

Featherwing purred, "You should have an apprentice."

"Maybe one of Yellowgaze's kits," Thistlestorm shrugged, "Just a little less than a moon to wait."

Thistlestorm loved the idea of having an apprentice. To be able to teach the apprentice not to fear anything, all the fighting skills, and all the hunting skills. He started hoping Yellowgaze's kits would come early. He wasn't sure he could wait for a few quarter-moons.

Featherwing coughed beside him. Thistlestorm didn't think anything of it, probably just inhaled a snowflake. Then her coughing turned severe. Thistlestorm stared wide-eyed at her.

"Featherwing, are you okay?" Thistlestorm ignored the stares.

The coughing started to subdue, "Just... yeah I'm fine."

"No, you're not," Thistlestorm sniffed.

"Yes, I -" Featherwing was cut off as Thistlestorm grabbed her by her scruff and dragged her to Flowerstorm's den.

"Flowerstorm?"

"Yes?" She was going through her herb stock, setting the shriveled and old ones to the side.

"Featherwing needs to be treated."

"No, I don't. I'm - " Featherwing broke off into a coughing fit.

Flowerstorm looked up, "Put her in a nest, let me find some catmint."

Thistlestorm dragged his coughing sister into one of the fresher nests. He realized that now there were no apprentices. He grimaced

as he realized the warriors would have to start doing apprentice duties. He made Featherwing comfortable, trying to avoid her coughing.

Flowerstorm sighed, "I have some catmint that could be useful, the rest is dried from last leafbare. I'll have to gather more."

She chewed the catmint in her mouth and brought it over to Featherwing. She tilted her head to the side for the chewed up catmint to drip into Featherwing's mouth.

"Rest," Flowerstorm ordered, "I need to salvage all the herbs I can for this leafbare."

Featherwing sighed, "Of course it's me that gets sick."

"Now you admit it?" Thistlestorm purred and walked outside the den.

The snowfall had stopped. A light blanket of snow covered the ground. It reminded him of the Gathering that he attended a couple of days ago. It's probably been one of the best Gatherings since NightClan started rising. RainClan kept bugging them for help, as they still were driven out of their territory. Thistlestorm admired Cavestar's determination. He shows up to Gatherings to tell the others that although they lost their territory, they're still strong.

Then he got the strong urge to see Snowberry again. He missed her dearly. She was driven crazy and ran off. Ran off with Gorsestorm's blood on her paws. Thistlestorm shook his head, that wasn't her. He should go see her.

He walked outside the entrance, Yang was guarding it, his fur fluffed up against the cold. They nodded a greeting and Thistlestorm jogged towards RainClan territory. He carefully padded across the frozen river and entered NightClan premises. He wondered if Needle - one of the apprentices he met a couple moons back - was still considering moving to the Clans' side. He moved further into the swampy land until he started skirting around camp. He sniffed the air, it reeked of NightClan with a slight hint of RainClan. A familiar scent hit him. It was Snowberry. He looked

through the trees, seeking for her white pelt. He didn't see a white pelt, he saw Snowberry though. Her pelt was mottled gray and brown and she was fighting a light brown tom. It was a young tom by the looks of it.

Snowberry hissed, "Fight harder you weakling!"

The tom growled, "I'm trying!"

Snowberry pinned him down, "Tiger is a fool of a mentor."

"Soot, Tiger is a good mentor! He just doesn't drive me hard like Panther does to Needle," he sighed.

Soot? Thistlestorm remembered that was Snowberry's old name when she was with NightClan the first time. That was nearly twelve moons ago.

Soot twitched her ear, "I'll report to Sal-inja later. Leave my sight!"

Soot looked where Thistlestorm was standing. She started walking towards him. He gulped and started to back away. He shouldn't have come here. She won't remember him, she'll kill him!

Soot was a tail-length away from him, "Intruder!" She hissed.

"No! I'm not an intruder, I'm your best friend!" Thistlestorm knew he couldn't run his way out of this. He'd have to try and win her back.

"I don't have friends, I had to kill my only one," Soot grimaced.

"You do have friends, from LightningClan!"

"Ew."

"Don't you remember me?"

"Of course I know you," Soot growled.

"Really?"

"I know everyone!"

Thistlestorm sighed. Back to square one, "It's me, Thistlestorm?"

Soot's eyes widened, "Thistlestorm?"

"Yeah!"

"You're first on Sal-inja's kill list," she muttered.

Thistlestorm flattened his ears, "Remember when we first found you? You were in this weird rock thing."

Her face looked confused.

"Remember Shadow, Hawk, and Dawn? They helped us fight NightClan when Haunting was the leader."

She mouthed their names as if they seemed familiar, "I used to like Shadow?"

Thistlestorm felt jealousy but Shadow used to be her crush, "Sure."

"You would spy for us, too," Thistlestorm added, "And you liked to call me Thistle."

Soot looked at the ground, her claws unsheathed. She was growling under her breath.

"Stop trying to get her back," a deeper voice spoke, "You won't win."

Thistlestorm realized it was Lurking Shadow's voice. He growled. He was possessing his mate! Thistlestorm brought hard blow to Soot. She yelped and land a tail-length away, obviously winded.

"What's my name?" Thistlestorm ran over to her.

"Thistle..." She struggled to get up.

"I'm sorry, Snowberry, forgive me for this," Then Thistlestorm brought his paws down on her head. She crumpled to the ground.

~Chapter Two~

[image]

Thistlestorm stared at the unconscious Snowberry laying on the floor. He felt guilty for having to knock her unconscious, but maybe it would work. Thistlestorm grabbed her by the scruff and started dragging her around the territory and towards the lake.

Once they got there, Thistlestorm was unsure of how to get across. Leafbare was only beginning, the lake only had a thin enough sheet of ice to hold up one cat. The ice would crack and most likely break underneath the weight of two cats. But he had to try.

He made sure his grip was tight on Snowberry's scruff and started scuffling across the ice. He was careful with each paw step, putting each one down cautiously. He looked across to find that they were halfway there. Triumphant, Thistlestorm picked up the pace.

Crack.

Thistlestorm only had a second to widen his eyes before he and Snowberry plunged into the icy water beneath. Thistlestorm yowled into Snowberry's thick fur, his paws thrashed in the cold water. He tried to pull himself up onto the unbroken ice, but then that just broke too. Thistlestorm was fighting to stay above the water with Snowberry in his mouth. Her weight was dragging him down. But he failed. His head was dragged underwater. Seconds later, he broke the surface again. This time Snowberry was gasping for air and shrieking in surprise. She broke off from Thistlestorm's grip and tried desperately to get herself onto the unbroken ice. She received the same results Thistlestorm did. She was yowling at the top of her lungs. Both were too winded to try and speak to each other. Thistlestorm did his best to look around. The cold was starting to numb his limbs. His fur was soaked wet, making it hard for him to stay above the water.

Then he got an idea. Thistlestorm kept trying to pull himself up

onto the ice, allowing it to break underneath his weight. He repeated this until there was ground he could pull himself up on. He dug his claws into the ground and heaved himself up. Snowberry was right there in the water. Her head couldn't stay above water. Thistlestorm leaned downwards and reached for her scruff. Lucky for him, he got his grip on it and pulled Snowberry out of the water and on the ground.

Snowberry lay on the ground beside him, her thick fur plastered to her body. She was coughing up water. Thistlestorm coughed up a little water as well. Then he went over to Snowberry and watched her recover.

After a few minutes, Thistlestorm spoke, "Snowberry?"

No answer.

Thistlestorm heard screeching coming from the water. Had someone else fallen in as well? He got up and looked over the side. He saw Lurking Shadow's spirit thrashing in the water. Thistlestorm twitched his whiskers in amusement.

Snowberry coughed again, her flanks heaved as her lungs were filled with air. Thistlestorm came back over to her and sat down, looking hopefully at her.

"Snowberry?" He asked again.

"T-Thistle," Snowberry rasped, managing a smile. She struggled to get into a sitting position but she did it.

"Snowberry!" Thistlestorm jumped for joy and landed right on top of her, knocking her over.

They shared a few licks and exchanges of smiles. Thistlestorm got off of Snowberry, "You're... You're back!"

"Thank you," Snowberry peeped out a laugh.

"Let's get you back to camp," Thistlestorm chuckled.

Yang looked in surprise as Snowberry came behind Thistlestorm

as they entered. All around cats were muttering. Snowberry flattened her ears and lowered her tail. After the epidemic in the icy river, all the mud and dirt was cleaned off Snowberry's fur. Their fur was still wet though. Featherwhisker ran up to them, despite having to be in the medicine den.

"What happened?"

Thistlestorm explained to her about him trying to save Snowberry, then the two of them fell in the river. Snowberry shuffled her paws.

Thistlestorm looked at her, "What's wrong?"

"I need to speak to Nettlestar," She hurried off to the leader's den.

Featherwing shrugged. Flowerstorm yelled at her to come back in. Muttering under her breath, Featherwing went back inside the medicine den. A few moments after that, Nettlestar came out with Snowberry, together they jumped on the High Rock.

"Let all cats old enough to hunt for themselves gather beneath the High Rock for an announcement!" Nettlestar called out.

Yang came in from guarding the entrance and joined the group of cats. Blossomheart sat outside the elder's den, sunbathing in the grass.

Snowberry stood up, "I-I have something to say."

Blossomheart stopped sunbathing and watched intently.

"I killed," Snowberry hesitated, looking at the rock below her, "I killed Gorsestorm."

Nettlestar was so shocked he almost fell off the High Rock. Gasps rippled through the Clan. Hostility covered it like a blanket. Yowls cried out from the crowd.

"Exile her!" Bouncestep cried out.

"Punish her!" Willowfoot hissed.

Stoneheart hushed them and turned back to Snowberry, "Express your reasons."

Snowberry blinked, "It was my claws. But not me."

"What do you mean?"

"I was being controlled," Snowberry choked on her words, "A Dark Forest spirit was controlling me. He took me to NightClan and started to turn my own soul into evil. I killed, I killed Icewish as well."

"She deserved it," Willowfoot scoffed.

"No," Snowberry shook her head, "She didn't deserve it. She thought NightClan was going to shape up the Clans, bring us back to our Golden Age when we were the strongest. But no, she found out that all NightClan wants is to kill us. As horrible as it sounds, I believe I did her a favor."

Stoneheart flashed Willowfoot a look.

"Thistlestorm saved me. He found me and took me from their camp. Unintentionally, he fell into a river with me in his jaws," A few laughs, "That was where the spirit slipped from me and into the river."

"Do you know who this Dark Forest spirit was?" Stoneheart pressed. His eyes narrowed. He used to be in NightClan, so he knew of some cats from the Dark Forest.

Snowberry didn't know, but Thistlestorm did, "Lurking Shadow, the current leader of the Dark Forest."

Stoneheart held back a gasp. Nettlestar hissed, "My brother, of course!"

Thistlestorm was almost surprised for a second. He had forgotten that Nettlestar and Lurking Shadow were brothers.

Snowberry looked apologetically at the cats below, "I'm sorry." Then she leaped down from the High Rock and crouched next to

Thistlestorm.

A few cats shot her hostile looks as they departed from the group.

Thistlestorm lay his head on hers, "Don't worry, they'll realize it wasn't you."

Snowberry just sighed and laid her head on her paws.

~Chapter Three~

[image]

-One Moon Later-

Thistlestorm came through the entrance, Willowfoot, Bouncestep, and Pikeleap trailing behind him. He just led the midnight patrol. He dropped a plump vole in the fresh kill pile and ran over to where Snowberry and Featherwing were sharing a blackbird.

Featherwing had greencough for about a moon but yesterday she started clearing up. Flowerstorm was allowing her outside the den now, but she had to come in every day for a follow-up of catmint. Unfortunately, she had gotten Rocktuft sick.

"How was the patrol?" Featherwing asked him, chewing a mouthful of blackbird.

"Pretty good, we all found at least one piece of prey," Thistlestorm sat down and started taking bites of what was left of the blackbird.

Snowberry purred, "That's the best patrol there has even been in leafbare!"

Thistlestorm nodded.

Snowberry looked around her to make sure other cats weren't listening, then she looked back at Featherwing and Thistlestorm, "I'm," she hesitated, "I'm pretty sure I'm pregnant..."

Thistlestorm jumped so hard that he fell backward, "What?" He sat back up, clearly embarrassed, "You mean... I'm.."

Snowberry flattened her ears romanticly, "You're a father."

Thistlestorm started jumping for joy, Featherwing cracked a laugh. She knew it would happen someday. She had come to accept that she had to share her brother. As long as he was happy, she was happy. She remembered Crashclaw's reaction when she told him.

Featherwing cursed to herself. She couldn't bring that up right now. They'd wonder who the mate was and if they found out...That wouldn't be good. She looked up at the moon, it was at its highest for the night. She would have to leave in a second or two.

"Well, gotta go!" Featherwing jumped to her feet and started walking to the entrance.

"Hey, Featherwing, wait up!" Thistlestorm called, "Why are you going out at midnight every night recently? Don't think I haven't noticed you get out of your nest every night."

"Just, restless," Featherwing lied.

"Just tell me!" Thistlestorm urged, coming closer, "I won't tell anyone else, not even Snowberry."

"Fine," Featherwing sighed, "I'm meeting someone."

"Who?"

"Crashclaw," Featherwing breathed.

Thistlestorm curled his lip, "You two are mates, aren't you?"

"Yes," Featherwing sighed, "But I couldn't help it! He has perfect fur, his personality has so many good aspects to it. I love his stories from when he was part of NightClan."

Thistlestorm growled under his breath, "That's against the warrior code! You'll be punished greatly if Nettlestar or Stoneheart finds out!"

"They won't," Featherwing narrowed her eyes, "Right?"

"I wouldn't wish exile upon my own sister," Thistlestorm sighed, "I just wish you acted differently." Then he went back to Snowberry.

Featherwing raced out the entrance and headed towards the abandoned twoleg den that lay west of RainClan territory. There was a large, old tree far away from the old den that her and Crashclaw always met. Once she got there, Crashclaw was waiting.

"Sorry I'm late!" Featherwing said out of breath.

"Take it easy," Crashclaw brushed his tail over her back, "You're carrying my kits."

"*Our* kits," Featherwing rolled her eyes as if it were a regular thing he said, in which it was.

"I wonder how we're going to deal with the whole 'the father is in a different Clan' thing," Featherwing sighed.

"Is there a tom that likes you maybe? Or doesn't have a mate and wants one? Or is even just willing enough to take care of them and pretend he's the father?" Crashclaw queried.

"I'm pretty sure there isn't a tom who likes me, and pretending to be some cats mate is plain mean. I don't know anyone who would be willing enough. Really the only toms there are is Pikeleap and Bouncestep. Pikeleap would be a better chance."

"Then ask him tomorrow."

"I'll try."

Featherwing was awfully tired from the run there. She cuddled up against Crashclaw and they watched the stars up there. They tried to guess which star was who. They even started discussing their kits' futures. Eventually, Featherwing's eyelids grew too heavy to hold up. She leaned against Crashclaw and fell asleep.

Short chapter, sorry. Didn't have anything else to put.

~Chapter Four~

[image]

I am really excited to write this book and get it done, so there may be some random fillers to move the book along. Don't mind them.

Snowberry grew weary. Who knew how many kits she was carrying, she had only been pregnant with them for only a little more than a quarter moon! These kits were heavy, she didn't understand how other queens made it look so easy.

But Snowberry wasn't ready to give up warrior duties so easily. She was determined to serve her Clan as long as she was able. Thistlestorm disagreed and thought she should already resign from a warriors' duty. *Silly*, she thought. *That's just because he's a stubborn tom. He thinks once I'm bearing kits, I'm incapable of anything.* Snowberry scoffed at the thought and headed back to the warrior's den.

Honestly, Snowberry hadn't even been outside that long. She was just walking around, bringing up completely random conversations with other cats. She saw Flowerstorm walk out with Rocktuft. His fur was ragged and his eyes were tired. The muscular tom looked weary, it was the first time Snowberry had ever seen him like this. Rocktuft was leaning on Flowerstorm's shoulder, struggling to lift each paw from the thick blanket of snow. He gasped in pain every time he put his paw down. The greencough must've really gotten a hold of Rocktuft, Snowberry thought grimly. Flowerstorm was just trying to give him fresh air, but even that seemed painful.

All of a sudden, Snowberry was filled with energy. She didn't seem so tired after all. She shrugged off the weird feeling and decided to go out for a walk by the river. The water always calmed her. She walked out the entrance to see that Thistlestorm was guarding it. He flattened his ears at the thought of Snowberry going out by herself. Snowberry stuck her tongue out at him and kept going.

Once she reached the river, she had completely forgotten that on the other side wasn't RainClan, but NightClan. She hated the idea of calling them Night*Clan*, they shouldn't qualify as a Clan at all! Sighing, she pushed the thought away and laid down to sunbathe in the little sun there was. The sky was mostly cloudy, a peek of blue here and there. Enough for Snowberry to calm down.

"You call yourself a *mentor,* Tiger?" A voice boomed.

"Torch is young! Once he's older I'll push him harder!" Another voice replied harshly. Snowberry rolled onto her stomach, her ears perked up. She was covered from any cats' line of sight, the snow definitely covered her up. She watched a black tom with darker markings come out (definitely Sal-inja) and a broad-shouldered light brown tabby tom beside him. Snowberry came to the conclusion that the tabby was named Tiger. He had three grueling scars over his right eye.

"We can't afford to play soft, Tiger!" Sal-inja growled, "We're going to attack soon, and Torch and Needle are going to need to know every move there is to take down these Clans!"

Snowberry widened her eyes. NightClan was planning to attack again?

Tiger curled his lip, "We tore Torch and Needle and Soot from their family, from their former Clan that we destroyed, and started training them hard straight away! Soot left us, leaving her sister and brother in despair! Then she came back and left again, leaving them even more torn inside. We can give them a break!"

Snowberry's thoughts went silent. Her...brother and sister? She...she had a family? Torch and Needle were her siblings?! Destroyed Clan?... She had so many questions she had to push them aside and keep listening.

"If they are true warriors," Sal-inja snarled, "Then they shouldn't care what we do to them!"

Tiger shook his head, "I thought I made the right choice by abandoning my twolegs. I thought you and Haunting offered

promise and hospitality, but I was wrong, especially now that you're leader. Haunting was much nicer to his cats than you were. You aren't just evil, you're cold-hearted evil. I'm leaving NightClan, you'll have to assign Torch a new and *better* mentor than I."

Sal-inja hissed, "Fool!" He brought his unsheathed claws up across Tiger's face, marking three scratches over his unscarred eye.

Tiger dropped his head and wailed in agony as his sight was blinded with blood, "At least let me say bye to my apprentice!"

"Traitors don't get second chances!" Sal-inja growled and leaped at Tiger. He sunk his claws into Tiger's neck and started tearing out flesh. Tiger kicked helplessly, but it was no use. Sal-inja brought his head down and clamped his jaws against Tiger's neck and jerked up. Tiger yowled as his upper spine tore from his body and went limp.

Snowberry stood up and staggered. Her vision went blurry. That wasn't murder, that was literally ripping someone from existence. Would Tiger go to the Dark Forest for being a part of NightClan? Or StarClan for realizing joining NightClan was wrong? Tiger's blood seeped into the river, turning it red. Her hearing shut off, and next was her sight. She fell to the ground and sank into darkness.

"Snowberry? Snowberry!" A voice urged. Snowberry felt a faint prodding in her side.

"Snowberry, you awake! What happened?" Once Snowberry's vision became clear, she saw Thistlestorm and Yang towering over her.

"Tiger," Snowberry stood up weakly, "Sal-inja killed one of his own warriors because he refused to drive his apprentice too hard." She beckoned her tail to the other side of the river, "Look."

Tiger was laying in a pool of his own blood. It was so much blood, Snowberry was astonished that his whole body wasn't covered in it. A white, hard, long figure protruded from Tiger's throat, Snowberry realized it was his neck. His neck bones had been detached from his skull and ripped from his body. Snowberry forced back bile at the sight. It was a horrible way to die, even if you did

horrible things.

Thistlestorm was gaping at the sight, "Sal-inja...can do *that*?"

"That's just one of them," Yang rasped, "Imagine fighting a whole Clan that is close in that strength."

"If one Clan is like that," Thistlestorm stumbled around, "Then how are we supposed to defeat them?"

~Chapter Five~

[image]

Snowberry padded around in her dreams. She was walking in LightningClan territory, nothing to bother her.

"Hmmm?" A voice hummed, "I see Lurking Shadow failed at his one job."

Snowberry cursed and looked up, but she didn't see anyone there. She hissed and lashed around, "Show yourself!"

"It'd be a shame if you had to be possessed *again*," the voice taunted, "If...if your unborn kits were slaughtered from the inside."

Snowberry growled, "No one is touching me or my kits! Show yourself!"

The voice laughed, "You don't want me to show myself, I'm sure."

"Coward!" Snowberry growled again.

A jet black tom with purple eyes lurked into her sight. His tail was bent awkwardly, he had a distorted hind leg, and many supposedly fresh wounds were scarred on his pelt. His purple eyes were ablaze, almost glowing in the dark.

Snowberry shuddered, "Who are you?"

"Haunting," The tom's muzzle curved in a sinful smile, "Don't you remember me? *Snowkit*?"

Snowberry stumbled backward, her heart rate increased as she had a flashback.

A small white kit was trying to catch a butterfly in the meadow. A cream and black she-cat watching from afar.

The kit looked at the she-cat, "Look, mom! I'm going to be the best

hunter of all of CloudClan!" The kit leaped, missing the butterfly by a hair.

"I'm sure you will, Snowkit, I'm sure you will," The queen purred as two other kits came into the meadow with Snowkit.

One kit was light brown, his eyes were two different colors, one brown and one yellow. He was chasing a dark gray she-kit with black splotches. Her tail was pointed at the tip, her eyes had a needle-sharp gaze.

The light brown kit was panting, "Slow down, Nightkit! I can't catch you!"

Nightkit looked behind her, "In your dreams, Shrewkit!"

Snowberry jolted back to reality. She remembered something! She started bouncing in place, her sister was Nightkit, and her brother was Shrewkit! But what were her parents' names?

"Ah, the memories," Haunting chuckled, "I remember *destroying* CloudClan, killing your father and mother, taking you three in to become the best cats of NightClan."

Snowberry thrashed her tail side to side, "There is no way you could've destroyed a whole Clan!"

"But I did," Haunting smiled.

Snowberry wailed, "Leave me alone! Go scare someone else!"

"But I must live up to my name," Haunting started stalking towards Snowberry.

"No!" Snowberry raked her claws against one of Haunting's wounds. He yowled as it opened the scar, he staggered weakly then vanished.

Snowberry fell to the ground, crying.

Snowberry woke up, the fur around her face was wet with tears. She looked at her slightly swollen belly. She sighed and wrapped her fluffy tail around it, nothing could harm her kits.

Thistlestorm was snoring beside her, she hated to wake him up, but she needed to tell him what had happened.

She prodded him in the side. After that didn't wake him up, she unsheathed her claws a little a poked him. Thistlestorm jolted awake with a small yelp. He narrowed his eyes at Snowberry.

"Thistlestorm," She sighed, "I had a dream."

Thistlestorm yawned, "Go on."

Snowberry told him about Haunting and her flashback to when she was a kit. He was surprised when he told her about CloudClan and that her siblings were Torch and Needle of NightClan.

"Needle doesn't seem to like NightClan that much. I saw her once and she told me about how cruel training was for her and Torch."

Willowfoot hissed from where she was laying a few nests away, "Shut up or go talk somewhere else!"

Thistlestorm growled underneath his breath and walked out of the den, beckoning Snowberry to follow.

"We should go and take them here, right now!" Snowberry urged.

He shook his head, "Not safe at all. NightClan is very aware with all of their warriors, they'll be able to tell if they go missing. Not only is it not safe for us, but for them. You've seen NightClan, they'll probably kill or majorly injure the two of them for trying to escape. We can't do anything about it, Snowberry, I'm sorry."

Snowberry hung her head, she ached to see her siblings, now knowing that they were actually her siblings. Thistlestorm licked the top of her head, "Don't worry, okay? Everything will turn out okay in the end."

Snowberry barely heard Thistlestorm whisper "hopefully" at the end of his sentence. Her eyelids were heavy as she fell asleep against Thistlestorm's warm body. This time, she didn't dream, and she thanked StarClan for it.

~Chapter Six~

[image]

Thistlestorm was bored. Nothing had been going on for the past few moons. Just the normal patrols and chatting with the other warriors. There was something odd about it, Thistlestorm hadn't known peace for a while, and now that it was here - even if it was there for a short amount of time - it made him uncomfortable.

That was until Yellowgaze started yowling in the middle of nowhere. Last time Thistlestorm saw her, she was chatting with Stoneheart. Stoneheart was just about to send out the noon patrol when Yellowgaze started writhing in agony in front of a half-eaten mouse.

Stoneheart flicked his tail, canceling the patrol and ran over to his mate, "Flowerstorm!"

The calico she-cat came racing through the entrance, somewhat shriveled catmint in her jaws. Thistlestorm sighed, leafbare was eating up all the herbs, and with danger ahead, it will be hard to cure any wounds.

Flowerstorm swiftly dropped the shriveled leaves in front of Featherwing, "Put them in my herb stock please!" And ran over to Yellowgaze, wailing like she was being slaughtered.

Thistlestorm was glad he wasn't a she-cat.

Flowerstorm looked at Stoneheart, "Help me bring her into the nursery! Yellowgaze, stay calm," Quickly, the deputy and the medicine cat worked together and brought the queen into the den.

Thistlestorm wanted to watch what happened, but he knew that Flowerstorm was very strict on letting birthing queens have their space. Every cat in LightningClan knew that. A few moments later, Stoneheart came out dragging his tail on the ground. Thistlestorm stifled a purr, Flowerstorm wouldn't even let the queen's own mate

be there.

The warriors stopped mid-conversation and watched and listened intently to the screaming coming from the den. After what seemed like forever, the yowling subsided into loud purring.

Flowerstorm poked her head out the entrance of the nursery, "Stoneheart you can come in!"

Tail held high, the deputy jogged into the den. Flowerstorm called out, "Two toms and a she-kit!" The Clan cheered excitedly at the announcement of new arrivals.

Thistlestorm purred and picked up a vole from the fresh kill pile. He brought it over to Featherwing, it had been awhile since he and his sister had shared a piece of prey.

"Share?" Thistlestorm mumbled through vole hair.

Featherwing purred and nodded, they ate the prey quickly, but it was enough to fill them both up. They talked a little about what Featherwing's kits will look like. She was on the verge of being a moon into being a queen.

After a while, Flowerstorm allowed a couple visitors at a time. Finally, Thistlestorm got to see the three little bundles of fur. Their fur was fluffed up as they nursed. Yellowgaze was asleep, exhausted from giving birth. One kit was a gray tabby who had noticeably long whiskers, another was a gray she-kit with a white underbelly, and on the far right was a smaller - but not by much - cream tom. He was fluffier than his siblings and had fairly smaller paws. Thistlestorm purred, he was pretty sure he wanted to mentor the cream tom.

He looked at Stoneheart, "Names?"

The deputy nodded, "We were able to figure those out before Yellowgaze passed out from exhaustion," he chuckled, "The tabby is Longkit, next to him is Amberkit, and at the end is Mousekit."

Thistlestorm purred, "Thanks for letting me see them," and started padding out.

Just as he started to walk out the entrance, Rocktuft came through. Thistlestorm (tried not to) stared in horror at the scrawny, once broad-shouldered, tom. You could see Rocktuft's ribs, he struggled with every step, his eyes were tired with sickness.

A cough shuddered through the sick tom, "Can I...see the kits?"

Flowerstorm hissed, "You'll get them sick!"

Rocktuft pressed his ears against his head, "Can I see them at a safe distance?"

Flowerstorm growled under her breath, "Fine."

She led Rocktuft to a safe distance away from the kits, but easily within view. Rocktuft's eyes softened at the sight of the bundles of fur.

"I remember when you were that little," Rocktuft rasped.

Flowerstorm let her fur lie flat as if all of a sudden realizing that Rocktuft was her father and not some arrogant and sick warrior, "And Pikeleap, too."

Rocktuft let out a raspy laugh, "Ha, he was moving as soon as he was born, I swear."

"Stop talking like you're old," Flowerstorm purred.

Rocktuft sighed, "You'll serve LightningClan well." Thistlestorm watched as the tom crumpled to the ground.

Flowerstorm wailed, "Rocktuft!"

Pikeleap came running in, almost shoving Thistlestorm to the ground. Thistlestorm wanted to hiss at the new warrior for his arrogance, but the situation was dire.

"Rocktuft, no," Pikeleap whispered, tears streaming down his face. He turned to Flowerstorm, "Save him! You're a medicine cat! Save him!"

Flowerstorm stood in horror, "I can't. Even if I were able to, it was his time to die. You see the state he was in? Greencough and depression was not a good mix for him..."

Stoneheart pressed his ears back, "Poor Rocktuft..."

Yellowgaze lifted her head wearily, "What..." She caught sight of the limp body of Rocktuft, "Oh, no!"

Thistlestorm backed out of the den, warriors were starting to crowd around. He turned to them, "Rocktuft... He's," he paused, "Dead."

Shrieks pierced through the Clan. Wails of sadness and horror, mutters and mumbles. Snowberry ran over to him, "How?"

"Greencough got the best of him," Thistlestorm shook his head, "He was depressed too, that surely didn't help."

Snowberry sighed, "You have to stop hiding your feelings you know."

"What do you mean?" Thistlestorm lied.

"Rocktuft was your mentor! And you're acting like his death was just the death of a warrior you weren't that close too," Snowberry dug her claws into the ground.

Thistlestorm looked at the ground, his vision was starting to blur with tears, "You're right, I'll miss him."

Featherwing happened to be right there, "Remember when you kept talking to me about how you wanted Rocktuft to be your mentor? And at your apprentice ceremony, Pikeleap and Flowerstorm were born?"

Thistlestorm laughed, "Rocktuft was the best mentor I could've asked for."

Snowberry purred, "Are you going to sit vigil with him tonight?"

Thistlestorm nodded, "He needs all the love he can get on his

journey to StarClan."

For the rest of the day, the cats that were closest to Rocktuft sat vigil with him through day and night. Since his mate left him, Flowerstorm and Pikeleap were going to bury him. They kindly invited Thistlestorm to come too. It was Thistlestorm's first time burying a cat, and it felt very sad. In the area were quite a few random flowers, where cats from maybe not too long ago or generations ago had been buried after their deaths.

Flowerstorm drew a heart in the dirt, "Goodbye, Dad."

Then together, the three of them headed back to camp.

~Chapter Seven~

[image]

There is going to be a lot of time skips in this book and I apologize, but please bear with it. I need these time skips to help move this book along and help emphasize some points. This book will also mainly be in Thistlestorm's point of view, occasionally Featherwing's and Snowberry's.

~2 Moons Later~

Stoneheart, being deputy and all, never had much time to be around Yellowgaze's kits. But he always spent time with them when he had the chance. Thistlestorm's own father hadn't been around much, that's why he wasn't super close to Yang. He asked Stoneheart why he bothered trying to create a strong bond with his kits. Stoneheart had simply replied with, "Things didn't go well with my father and me, I don't want that to happen to my kits."

Thistlestorm had gotten permission from Stoneheart to hang around the kits and act as sort of... a second father. He let them attack him, and in turn, he'd gently prod them with his paw and knock them over. Kits were amusing to him, he couldn't wait until Snowberry bore his kits in less than a moon. Which reminded him that she, along with Featherwing, moved into the nursery recently. Those ignorant she-cats, Thistlestorm snorted.

Mousekit, a cream fluffy tom with green eyes, pounced on Thistlestorm's tail. Thistlestorm felt tiny, harmless teeth bite into his tail. Purring, Thistlestorm knocked Mousekit over, "What do you think you're doing?"

Mousekit shuffled his small paws, "Longkit and Amberkit are busy playing their own game. They said my paws were too small to do anything right because I always trip. So I was thinking, you and I could play a game!"

Thistlestorm was completely aware of Mousekit's other siblings

occasionally being rude to their smaller brother. Sometimes Thistlestorm had to force the kits to let Mousekit play with them.

"Well, what do you want to play?" Thistlestorm asked.

Mousekit ran into the nursery and came back out with a small clump of moss, "Mossball?"

Thistlestorm remembered that mossball was his favorite game as a kit. What kit doesn't like a good, old game of mossball?

"Okay," Mousekit gave the clump of moss to Thistlestorm to roll up into a ball. Thistlestorm flicked the ball towards Mousekit, who then proceeded to try and stop it from passing his "goal". By goal, Thistlestorm meant two sticks put next to each other.

Together, they played mossball for a while until Yellowgaze called the kits in to nurse and take a nap. Mousekit ran towards the nursery, almost tripping in the process, "See you later, Thistlestorm! I'll try to get Stoneheart to play mossball with me too!"

Snowberry came out of the nursery as soon as the kits came in, she laid down next to Thistlestorm, "You like Mousekit, don't you?"

Thistlestorm looked at his mate, "He's a cool little guy. I think I'll ask Nettlestar if I can mentor him."

"I've seen the kits play around in the nursery," Snowberry sniffed, "Mousekit is always excluded or gets the smallest part in the game. It's a little sad to watch, Yellowgaze barely notices."

"Yeah," Thistlestorm sighed, "I feel like Stoneheart is more involved in the kits than Yellowgaze is. It's sort of surprising because Yellowgaze was absolutely exhilarated when she found out that she was pregnant."

"I don't know," Snowberry sighed, "Do you plan on going to the Gathering in a bit?"

"I plan to," Thistlestorm nodded.

Nettlestar leaped out of the leader's den, "Blossomheart,

Thistlestorm, Willowfoot, Pikeleap, Bouncestep, along with Stoneheart and Flowerstorm of course, let's get going!"

"Speaking of the Gathering," Snowberry purred, "Make sure to tell me what happened!"

When LightningClan arrived, to Thistlestorm's surprise, they were the first ones there. That almost never happened. They waited a while until eventually, the other three Clans came. Thistlestorm stood up and walked over to RainClan. He looked for a light gray tom by the name of Crashclaw.

Finally, he spotted the tom grooming himself. Thistlestorm ran over to him, "Hey...Crashclaw, right?"

Crashclaw looked up, his amber gaze had a hint of humor and seriousness in it, "Featherwing's brother, right?"

"You two are mates," Thistlestorm let out a low growl, "You come from an enemy group and you come here, seeking a better society and then you break the rules?"

Crashclaw's ears perked up, "I was totally aware of the warrior code, but, I couldn't help it."

Thistlestorm growled. Crashclaw scratched his claws through the dirt, "I moved here not only hoping for a better society but to start a family. Flailwhisper and Splashstream are both way older than me, I had no one."

"Fine," Thistlestorm sighed annoyingly, "But you treat Featherwing like she's the leader of your Clan, got it? If I find out you disrespected my sister in any way-"

Crashclaw interrupted Thistlestorm, "I *love* Featherwing, okay? I wouldn't do anything to hurt her! Now back off and leave me alone before you draw attention to us!"

Nettlestar yowled, calling the signal for the Clans to stop sharing tongues and sit with their own Clan for the Gathering to start.

Thistlestorm walked back to LightningClan's section of the

meadow and sat down. Nettlestar spoke first, "LightningClan is doing well, along with our three new kits that I mentioned in the last Gathering. We have two queens that are rather close to giving birth, so pray to StarClan that it goes well."

Pebblestar nodded and stood up, "We have two new apprentices, Foxpaw and Hollypaw, their mentors are Voleheart and Eaglecry. Other than that, BreezeClan is well."

"Foxpaw! Hollypaw!" The Clans cheered. Thistlestorm caught sight of them hiding amongst their mentors.

"Littlestorm has gotten severe greencough," Emberstar breathed out, "Even in his sickness, he is frantically trying to teach Sparrowpaw everything she needs to know. She is learning quick and well. Littlestorm knows that this is what was going to kill him, so I pray to StarClan that his last days aren't painful."

Murmurs spread throughout the Clans. Thistlestorm was devastated to hear the news. Littlestorm was a great medicine cat, it was hard to hear that his last days were near.

Cavestar brought the Clans back to attention. Thistlestorm couldn't help but notice how scrawny the leader was. It must be hard having to live outside of their territory and cope with land prey. They didn't have access to their river.

"I have a favor to ask of the leaders here," Cavestar began, "I ask for help."

"Help with what?" Pebblestar twitched an ear.

"Getting our territory back," the RainClan leader replied.

"That's your problem, Cavestar," Emberstar growled, "We can't afford to lose our own warriors for your cause!"

Cavestar hissed at her, "Do you not see the state I am in? RainClan needs a river! We can barely hunt on land, and that's costing us! If the 'Big Battle' is coming soon, then we are in no state to fight alongside you!"

"BreezeClan will help," Pebblestar meowed after talking to Redspots.

"Thank you!" Cavestar sighed in relief, "At least one Clan is nice enough to help!" He eyed Emberstar and Nettlestar.

Nettlestar sighed, "I wish I could help, but we have queens that we can't afford to get hurt. If we help you, we're leaving only a few warriors back at camp, leaving us at a weakness for any NightClan warriors who take the advantage to take *our* camp."

Cavestar pounced on Nettlestar, pinning the leader down, "I never thought of you as selfish, Nettlestar, but now, you're nothing more than selfish!" With a hiss, Cavestar shoved Nettlestar off the Great Rock and stalked off, beckoning RainClan to follow him.

Thistlestorm was relieved when Nettlestar was able to (barely) land on his paws. It was still enough to wind the old cat. Flowerstorm cussed under her breath and aided Nettlestar on the way back to camp.

~Chapter Eight~

[image]

~One Moon Later~

Nettlestar wasn't doing too well since he was pushed off the Great Rock. He was having breathing problems as if the fall had hurt his lungs. Flowerstorm was struggling to find enough coltsfoot to soothe his throat and lungs. Thistlestorm had a pure hatred for Cavestar now. Not once, but twice now had the RainClan leader pushed Nettlestar off the Great Rock. Nettlestar had refused to help his Clan when they were fighting NightClan. What Cavestar didn't understand was that Nettlestar was going crazy at the time. Now Cavestar has an eternal grudge against the LightningClan leader and that probably won't help in the battle.

What really made Thistlestorm excited was that both his sister and mate were close to giving birth. Both were unable to leave the nursery. Unfortunately, Stoneheart was keeping Thistlestorm busy with patrols. Finally, Thistlestorm decided it was a good time to visit them.

He poked his head in the nursery, Flowerstorm was sorting herbs on one side. Snowberry and Featherwing were chatting.

"Hey," Thistlestorm chanted and walked in, sitting next to the she-cats.

Featherwing looked up at him, "Oh hey, Thistle-" She shrieked and started hyperventilating.

Snowberry brushed her tail over Featherwing's swollen belly to comfort her. Thistlestorm widened his eyes, "Is she okay?"

Flowerstorm nodded, "It's normal for queens to have sudden, short, sharp pains."

Featherwing was still hyperventilating.

Flowerstorm stared at Featherwing, counting under her breath. Then, alarmed, she ran over to Featherwing, "Thistlestorm, out!"

Thistlestorm was shoved out of the nursery. He peeked his head in as he watched Flowerstorm study the constantly rising flank of Featherwing.

Featherwing let out another shriek. Thistlestorm vaguely heard Flowerstorm telling Featherwing comforting words, Snowberry aiding.

His sister was about to give *birth,* Thistlestorm thought excitedly.

Warriors started crowding around the entrance. Shrieking and desperate meowing came from the nursery, Thistlestorm was extremely worried. He'd never heard such painful birthing before.

Finally, the shrieking and meowing turned into purring and a sigh of relief.

"Thistlestorm, and Thistlestorm only, come in!" Flowerstorm yelled.

Absolutely exhilarated, Thistlestorm ran in to see three *gray* bundles of fur curled up against Featherwing. Their fur was fluffed up in different directions from being licked. They were adorable. They went in order as they nursed, biggest on the left, smallest on the right. And the smallest was pretty small.

Featherwing nudged the runt with her muzzle, it mewed annoyingly and kept suckling, "Is this one okay?"

Flowerstorm brought the kit over with her paw and examined it carefully, "She's awfully small. Perhaps...*too* small, I'm afraid. I've seen some runts before but she...she's smaller than a runt. I wouldn't name her if I were you," Flowerstorm shook her head, "She probably won't make it."

Featherwing frowned, "The others?"

"I can tell from here that the two toms are in good shape, should be expected to live," Featherwing sighed.

Thistlestorm rumbled a purr, "What will you name them?"

Featherwing spoke in code, "*Pikeleap* requested that one of them was named Rainkit. I was thinking Rainkit and Sootkit for the toms. I don't know about the she-kit and even if I *should* name her."

"Of course we should name her," Thistlestorm insisted, "How about Ashkit?"

Featherwing nodded, "That's a good name. Ashkit it is."

A few seconds later, Pikeleap came in out of breath, "Ah, I'm so sorry Featherwing, I was out on patrol. How are our little ones?" He purred.

He was doing a good job at pretending to be the father. Flowerstorm looked confused.

"He's a tabby, you're a tabby, but all three of them are pure gray," Flowerstorm flattened her ears, "How?"

"Don't overthink it, Flowerstorm," Pikeleap quickly chuckled, "How about you give us some alone time with our new family?"

"Sure, sure," Flowerstorm blankly nodded and walked out of the den.

Thistlestorm was relieved. He looked at Pikeleap, "So you're the pretend father?"

Pikeleap's neck fur rose, "Are you calling me a fake?"

Featherwing sighed, "Chill, Pikeleap. He knows who the real father is. Thanks by the way."

"Oh," Pikeleap let his neck fur lie flat, "No problem. I've always wanted kits, but also I want to go solo. This is a good opportunity for both. I'll treat them as my own kits, I won't let them be taken away, I'll bet my life on that."

Thistlestorm purred and brushed his tail on Snowberry's sleeping body. Her face was so peaceful in her sleep, when awake she

seemed stressed. He felt her flanks convulse. He widened his eyes as she yelped out of sleep.

"Odd," Snowberry meowed weakly, "They've never done that before."

The queen convulsed again. Were his kits being born *too?*

Snowberry convulsed again and started breathing heavily, she dug her claws into the ground, "Get Flowerstorm," she rasped.

Thistlestorm ran out of the den, his eyes wide with worry, "Flowerstorm!" He looked around camp and couldn't see her. *Mouse-dung,* he thought. She must be getting coltsfoot. He ran out of the camp, parting his jaws to pick up her scent. Accomplished, he found the scent and hastily followed it. He accidentally ran head first into the medicine cat.

Flowerstorm whipped around, her claws met Thistlestorm's face in the process. Thistlestorm jumped back.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," Flowerstorm started apologizing frantically.

"Stop! Snowberry is giving birth!"

"Her too?" Flowerstorm bolted towards camp. It took Thistlestorm a second but soon he was straight behind her.

They were too late. Three kits lay by Snowberry. One was in front of her paws, she was nudging it constantly, tears in her eyes.

"What's wrong?" Thistlestorm urged.

"The birth went fine, it barely hurt," Snowberry said quickly, "But this little she-kit didn't make it." She added quietly.

Thistlestorm sniffed the kit. The scent of death wavered through him. A blanket of sadness fell onto the tom. It was a light-gray she-kit, good-sized, but dead.

"Give her a name," Thistlestorm whispered.

"Lightkit," Snowberry murmured, nudging the limp body again, "We give you our fairest wishes for a safe journey to StarClan."

Flowerstorm dropped her head, "I'm so sorry, I shouldn't have left. Maybe if I had stayed, Lightkit would be-"

Snowberry lifted her head, "It's not your fault, don't blame it on yourself."

Flowerstorm sighed and examined the other two, "Healthy kits, the tabby is a tom, white one is a she-kit."

Snowberry purred, "You name the tom, I'll name the she-kit."

The tom was a cream tabby tom, his colors reminded Thistlestorm of a scorpion, "How about Scorpionkit?"

"Not bad," she nodded, "This will be Frostkit."

Yellowgaze had to keep her excited kits at bay as Thistlestorm, Snowberry, Pikeleap, and Featherwing talked about their kits' future

~Chapter Nine~

[image]

~2 Moons Later~

Thistlestorm bounded with joy into camp. He swiftly dropped a scrawny mouse onto the fresh kill pile and sat in the clearing, waiting for Nettlestar to start the meeting. A small cream tabby tom pounced on his paw, his tail swishing enthusiastically.

Thistlestorm purred and knocked the kit onto his back, "Hey there, Scorpionkit."

Scorpionkit rolled back over and attacked Thistlestorm's leg, "Don't act like you know me, RainClan cat!" The kit sank his tiny teeth into the warrior's leg.

Scorpionkit was soon joined by his sister, Frostkit. She leaped onto her brother, tumbling him over. Together they wrestled and Snowberry watched, amused. Thistlestorm was so distracted by his beloved kits, that he didn't notice Nettlestar jump - or rather struggled - onto the Great Rock.

"All cats old enough to hunt for themselves, gather beneath the Great Rock for a Clan meeting!" Nettlestar yowled.

Warriors took a break from sharing tongues and gathered in groups beneath the Great Rock. Yellowgaze and Stoneheart sat directly beneath the rock, their kits - now six moons old - shuffling excitedly in front of them.

"Longkit, Amberkit, and Mousekit, you have reached the age of six moons, and it is time for you to be apprenticed," Nettlestar nodded at the kits, "From this day on, you will be Longpaw, Amberpaw, and Mousepaw."

The Clan let out yowls of excitement.

Nettlestar gave a gentle glance at Longpaw, "Longpaw, you are the firstborn of your litter, and son of my deputy. I will be your mentor, and I will pass down all I know to you in your training," Nettlestar leaped down from the rock and touched noses with Longpaw.

Longpaw stuck out his tongue teasingly at Amberpaw. She growled and looked away.

Nettlestar purred, "Amberpaw, your mentor will be Twigwhisper," He looked at the senior she-cat, "Twigwhisper, you were an excellent mentor to Featherwing and I hope that you pass down your wits and kindness down to Amberpaw."

Twigwhisper dipped her head and walked over to her new apprentice and touched noses. They sat off to the side, waiting to see who Mousepaw's mentor would be.

"Mousepaw, I have decided that Thistlestorm will be your mentor," Nettlestar purred as Mousepaw started jumping up and down in excitement. He looked at Thistlestorm, "Thistlestorm, I believe that you are ready to take on your first apprentice. You received amazing training from Rocktuft, and you have shown yourself to be strong and gentle. You will be the mentor of Mousepaw, and I expect you to pass down all you know to him."

Mousepaw came over to Thistlestorm and they touched noses. Thistlestorm finally had an apprentice. He was thrilled to be a mentor.

"Longpaw! Amberpaw! Mousepaw!" The Clan cheered. Finally, they had apprentices, and they wouldn't need to do any apprentice work anymore. The Clan desperately needed new warriors, and they couldn't wait for the next six moons to come.

Nettlestar nodded to Stoneheart, "Keep the Clan in check, we're all going to give our apprentices a tour," He looked at Twigwhisper and Thistlestorm, "Is that okay?"

Thistlestorm nodded, "Nothing like being given a tour with your other siblings."

Longpaw knocked Mousepaw over, "The *leader* is my mentor! And you just get sucky Thistlestorm! Ha!"

Thistlestorm let out a low growl, "I don't care what you call me, but don't you dare make fun of your brother like that."

Longpaw shrank back and bounced back to Nettlestar.

Mousepaw pressed against Thistlestorm, "Thanks," he muttered.

Thistlestorm sighed, "Don't let them bother you like that. So what, you're smaller in some ways, but you can still be better than them."

Mousepaw lifted his tail, "I want to be a good fighter, like you!"

His mentor purred, "I will teach you all I know, little one."

The tour had made them all hungry. The apprentices shared a plump rabbit that was caught in it's burrow. Thistlestorm had the scrawny mouse he caught earlier. The fresh kill pile didn't have much in it, leafbare was pretty harsh this winter. Luckily, it seemed like only Rocktuft and Featherwing had caught it, but the sickness ended when Rocktuft died.

Thistlestorm missed Rocktuft, his former mentor, but the warrior must be happy in StarClan. But how could he be? He seemingly had no family that he was close to with him. Thistlestorm shook his head and finished up his mouse.

The rest of the day was pretty simple. Nothing to worry about, patrols as usual, talking like normal. Thistlestorm was bored, he lay down in his nest and dropped his head on his paws.

Sorry, not much for this chapter ~ But I'm going to be writing a lot more.

~Chapter Ten~

[image]

Snowberry curled her tail against her kits. Scorpionkit and Frostkit were perfect. She wouldn't trade them for the world. They'd be great warriors for sure. The two loved to wrestle and seemed to dream about being the best of LightningClan. Scorpionkit wanted to be a great fighter, Frostkit wanted to be the best hunter.

Purring, Snowberry let them suckle themselves to sleep. Tired as well, Snowberry drifted off into a dream.

Snowberry padded on bloodstained grass. Horrified, she sniffed it. She could smell the blood faintly, but it seemed like it had been there for a couple of years at least.

There were a couple few old trees in the meadow. They all had holes in them wide enough for a cat to fit into. It almost looked like a giant woodpecker had been there. Dried up mud paw-prints were on the trees, some had claw marks through them.

On the largest tree at the top was a large hole, next to it was a large paw-print with four claw marks through it. Beneath it was a slightly smaller hole, with a slightly smaller paw-print. There were three claw marks through it. She poked her head into the smaller hole, if you concentrated, you could smell the ever faint scent of cat.

The other tree had only one paw-print with two claw marks through it. There were about two dozen holes in the tree, sized just right to fit an average sized warrior. Another tree had three really large holes. One hole had a paw-print with three curved claw marks through it. Inside the hole was super spacey. It was large enough to fit several cats. A crevice in the tree had shriveled leaves in it. Snowberry sniffed the leaves but couldn't get any scent out of them. Another one of the really large holes connected itself to the space.

The last hole was slightly higher up and had enough room for about five cats.

Snowberry wondered what group of cats once lived here. The other tree had a dozen holes in it that could fit about a dozen smaller cats.

Suddenly, familiar scents started flooding through her. They were very familiar, but Snowberry couldn't make them out. Then she saw starry spirits walking through the territory. They looked lost, as if desperate for a resting place.

She saw cats sleeping in the holes like nests. Snowberry saw a few she-cats walking among their young kits. Apprentice-sized cats pouncing at each other. Larger cats were even teaching some of the smaller ones. It was like a Clan, but Snowberry didn't understand. This Clan didn't exist near the current ones.

A largely built tom with long silky white fur was laying down on a branch sticking out from the largest tree. He looked down pleasantly at his "Clan", like the way a leader would. Snowberry was confused, she looked around trying to look for an answer. She jumped onto one of the trees and went to one of the higher holes. Inside of it, a cream tabby she-cat nursing three kits. Two girls and a boy. The father was crouching near the she-cat. He was a light brown tom. Snowberry widened her eyes as she realized the fur colors of the kits. One was dark gray with black spots, like Needle from NightClan, the other was a light brown tom like Torch from NightClan. The other one was white...like herself. Shocked, Snowberry almost lost her grip on the tree bark.

That couldn't be her. There was no way.

Yowls shot across the clearing, cats jumping from their nests in the trees with bristling fur. Snowberry looked to see a black tom with purple-like eyes leading a group of cats. Behind him was Salinja and all the other cats that were currently in GloomClan. Except for Lion. Snowberry looked among the cats of the "Clan" to see that Lion was there with them. With the blink of an eye, the two groups clashed. The "leader" jumped down from his branch gracefully and met who Snowberry realized was Haunting. The two leaders fought

with no mercy. But ever so soon, the white tom was laying lifeless on the ground, Haunting was barely injured.

Slowly, cats started vanishing from the clearing. Until all that remained was Haunting staring at the cream tabby she-cat, trying to lead her kits away from it all.

Haunting put his paw on the dark gray and black she-kit. She squeaked helplessly.

"What's their names?" Haunting laughed.

The she-cat cowered, "The dark she-kit is Nightkit...the brown one is Treekit... the white one is, Snowkit."

Snowberry widened her eyes. That could not be her!

Haunting hummed and let go of the she-kit and grabbed Snowkit, "This one resembles light, I'm afraid I have to kill her. Perhaps I should kill them all, they'll probably be useless anyway. But I can let you live."

The she-cat yowled, "Don't kill my kits, please! Kill me instead! But promise me that you won't kill them!"

Sal-inja came up from behind the she-cat and slaughtered her. Haunting looked at the kits, "Come, let's go to your new home."

Then, NightClan left.

Snowkit, Nightkit, Treekit...

They're all alive still?

That tom kept you alive?

Thank StarClan.

I miss you all...

Snowberry fell from the tree and blanked out into darkness.

The rain that comes after a fire, the soot from after the fire, the frost of the winter and the scorpion of the summer, will follow the ashes of the dead to bring the clouds back into the sky.

~Chapter Eleven~

[image]

~1 Moon Later~

Featherwing decided it was time.

"Where are we going?" Rainkit had asked.

"Is it a surprise?" Sootkit had jumped excitedly.

Ashkit was just following them quietly.

She couldn't hide the truth from them forever.

While Featherwing led them across the territory, she could hear Rainkit and Sootkit teasing Ashkit.

"I wonder why mom took you along!" Sootkit curled his lip.

"Yeah, you're too small to handle anything!" Rainkit added.

Featherwing sighed. She wanted to defend Ashkit, but the kit needed to learn to defend herself. Or maybe it wasn't that. Maybe it's the fact that Ashkit will likely die soon, and that Featherwing doesn't want to get too attached. She and Flowerstorm are both surprised that Ashkit was alive at three moons old. Featherwing remembered that Scorpionkit and Frostkit liked to tease Ashkit too. They only joined in because they were bored, not really for the sheer joy of putting her on a lower status.

They are just kits, Featherwing shook her head, they'll learn eventually.

Then they made it to the river.

"Whoa!" Rainkit and Sootkit stared at the frozen sheet of ice.

"Isn't there supposed to be water?" Ashkit mumbled.

"In leafbare the water is frozen, it won't be long until newleaf," Featherwing put a paw on the ice. It cracked at the light pressure of her paw.

She flattened her ears. This ice won't be able to hold up her body weight, let alone her and three kits. She looked at the distance from one bank to the other. Could she jump?

She looked at her kits, "Stay here, I just need to test something."

Featherwing bunched up her haunches and sprang to the other side, just barely making it. This is great! She beamed. She jumped back and grabbed Sootkit, then she jumped back to the other side. She did this with Rainkit, and then Ashkit until all four of them were on the other side.

"Where are we?" Sootkit snorted, "It smells gross!"

"I know," Featherwing managed a laugh, "Imagine having to deal with it for a few days." She recalled the fire that occurred in LightningClan camp not too long ago. They had taken refuge in RainClan's camp. That was when Cavestar and Nettlestar were friends.

"Now wait here," Featherwing sat down while Rainkit and Sootkit wrestled with each other. Ashkit just huddled up against her mother's tail.

"What's wrong?" Featherwing asked her only daughter.

"Nothing," Ashkit replied simply.

"Hey!" Crashclaw's voice made Featherwing jump a little. She didn't hear him at all.

"Oh, hi, Crashclaw," Featherwing purred.

Rainkit and Sootkit stopped wrestling and stared at the bulky gray tom.

"Who is that?" Rainkit stood up, sizing up the RainClan warrior.

Crashclaw rubbed his paw on Rainkit's head, "I'm your father."

"No you're not!" Sootkit growled, doing his best to look menacing, "Pikeleap is!"

"Actually," Featherwing continued, "Crashclaw is your father. Pikeleap is your...LightningClan father."

Ashkit jumped up, "I knew it! I knew Pikeleap wasn't our father! He looks nothing like us!"

Rainkit shoved Ashkit back down, "You don't know anything, and don't act like it!"

Whimpering, Ashkit hid behind Featherwing.

"Tell me about 'em!" Crashclaw gleamed.

Rainkit toppled Sootkit over. Featherwing looked up at her mate, "Rainkit is the darkest one. Sootkit is slightly lighter colored, and Ashkit is the smallest and lighter colored."

Featherwing looked down, "She isn't expected to make it to six moons."

Crashclaw flicked his tail, "She's halfway there, she should be fine."

"How's RainClan?" Featherwing decided to change the topic.

"Doing pretty good!" Crashclaw twitched his whiskers, "Rabbitpaw is learning quickly. He's quick like a rabbit, he can flick fish out of the water faster than you can blink an eye!"

Featherwing purred, "And the other apprentices?"

"Tallwatcher is old, he says this will be his last apprentice before he expects himself to retire," A breeze ruffled his fur, "But he's a skilled warrior nonetheless and I'm sure Brackenpaw will be a great warrior. As for Slatepaw, she has a great mentor too. I can't wait until they're all warriors so I don't have to feel like the youngest anymore. Everybody else is a senior warrior."

"You'll be-" Featherwing was cut off by a growl. She looked to see a black tom with amber eyes emerge from the shadows.

"So... you had kits Featherwing?" The tom flicked his tail.

Featherwing widened her eyes and stood up, bringing her kits to her side, "Crowstream?"

He hissed, "I'm Crow only! I refuse to go by a foolish Clan name."

Featherwing recalled that Crowstream had once crushed on her and confessed it. She remembered having to reject him. He must be jealous now.

"How is, um, NightClan?"

"Pretty good," Crow nodded calmly, "Lark is my new mate. She says I'm better than Rocktuft ever was."

Featherwing dropped her head, "Rocktuft died a bit ago."

"Serves him right," Crow snorted.

Crashclaw growled, "Why are you here?"

"Patrolling the borders!" Crow laughed, "What else would I be doing?"

"I thought you guys hated doing anything Clan-like," Crashclaw curled his lip.

"Sure," Crow shrugged, "But some of it makes sense. Borders have to be controlled. Cats can hunt and eat whenever and whatever they want."

"Isn't it brutal there?" Featherwing asked, wide-eyed.

"A little," Crow didn't seem to mind, "I get a few deep wounds now and then. But it doesn't affect me. Claw is a great mentor, harsh like a mentor should be."

"You get mentored?"

"Of course!" He snorted, "They need to train us out of the Clan ways."

"How come you aren't killing us right now?" Crashclaw growled.

"Well, I may have switched sides now, but I'm not completely evil. You guys just need to go and I'll be on my way and cover up your scent."

Featherwing growled and picked up Ashkit by her scruff. Crashclaw picked up Rainkit, and Sootkit got on his back.

"I don't know if I should say thanks," Featherwing mumbled and walked back to her side of the camp.

~Chapter Twelve~

[image]

Thistlestorm adored his kits. They were so lively and he couldn't wait to see until they were apprentices.

Scorpionkit was crawling all over him, "Surrender, RainClan warrior!"

Frostkit was batting Thistlestorm's paw, not really the fighting type.

Mousepaw jumped over to Thistlestorm, "Can you teach me some fighting moves now?"

Thistlestorm stood up, "Sure. Kits go back to your mother."

They both complained but they later turned to go attack Snowberry. Thistlestorm purred.

"Let's go," Thistlestorm led the way to the training hollow.

The training hollow was on the side of LightningClan territory that was closer to the Twolegplace. It was basically a clearing with fewer trees that mentors took their apprentices.

Amberpaw and Twigwhisper were there, practicing battle moves. Amberpaw, Thistlestorm observed, was a fast learner. She rolled and tumbled, quickly dodging Twigwhisper's attacks and quickly returning them to catch her mentor off guard.

He led Mousepaw to one end of the clearing. He was going to make sure this was a lengthy training, recently they've been having only small, short ones.

Thistlestorm introduced the front paw attack, which was LightningClan's signature move, and a simple basic move for every other Clan. Most warriors would expect it from apprentices in a battle, but it was the number one mechanism for defense if you

weren't that skilled in battle. After Mousepaw mastered that, Thistlestorm showed him the tackle. He lightly tackled Mousepaw to the ground, pinning him and telling him all the ways you could hurt your opponent in this position. Mousepaw then tried it on Thistlestorm. The apprentice was rather lightweight, but Thistlestorm let himself fall to the ground to make Mousepaw feel better. Then his apprentice batted him with his small paws.

Then Thistlestorm decided to show Mousepaw LightningClan's secret battle move, that the other Clan's rarely or didn't practice at all. You look at one side of your opponent, to trick them into thinking that you were going to attack that side, then you lunge at their other side, catching them off guard. Then you can pin them down while they're stunned, and land in a few good blows. Mousepaw mastered this move. Finally, Thistlestorm showed Mousepaw the under-attack. First, you give a hard blow to your opponent's face, while they're stunned for that one second, you dive underneath them and kick your hind legs against them so they stumble and fall. That was when you could pin them down once again and have a good few moments to attack them.

It was a little after dawn when they had started training. Now it was well after sunhigh. Twigwhisper went over to Thistlestorm.

"Want to have them practice fight? They could use it," Twigwhisper suggested.

"Sure," Thistlestorm nodded, "Sounds good."

They had Mousepaw and Amberpaw stand a fox-length away from each other. Both were posed to fight. Amberpaw's tail flicked lightly while Mousepaw's tail was as still as a dead mouse. Amberpaw looked confident, Mousepaw was slightly uneasy.

"Remember what I taught you, Mousepaw!" Thistlestorm called out, trying to be encouraging.

"No claws, Amberpaw!" Twigwhisper let out a little harshly. She looked at Thistlestorm and whispered, "She seems to always have the incident of letting them slip out." He took notice of the small amounts of blood that was in Twigwhisper's fur.

"And," Thistlestorm waited, flicking his tail impatiently, "Fight!"

Amberpaw jumped as soon as Thistlestorm spoke. She glided over Mousepaw's head and landed behind her brother. Swiftly, she turned around and knocked him over, pinning him down and batting his chest and belly. Mousepaw came to his senses and kicked Amberpaw off. She stumbled a little as she landed half a tail-length away, giving Mousepaw enough time to land a front paw attack on her shoulder. Amberpaw growled and shoved him to the ground, again attacking his chest and belly.

Mousepaw struggled, but eventually rolled over, tripping Amberpaw in the process. The she-apprentice fell on her underbelly and Mousepaw pinned her down and started gently nipping her back. Hissing, Amberpaw pushed her legs underneath her and Mousepaw flew a tail-length away, landing on his side. The breath was knocked out of him and he was stunned.

Thistlestorm stomped his paw on the ground as Amberpaw started to approach Mousepaw again, "That's enough for today! You both did well."

Mousepaw lumbered over to his mentor, "I did horrible! Amberpaw is so much better than me!"

Thistlestorm looked at Twigwhisper, "That first move she used, that's badger defense only. Why did you teach it to her to use in battle?"

Twigwhisper shrugged, "It's not the full on move. I told her that if she happens to be fighting a badger, that she bites it's hind leg. In battle she can just pounce, which is what she did. Are you questioning my authority as a mentor?"

"No!" Thistlestorm said without hesitation, "You were an excellent mentor for my sister, I would never doubt you."

Twigwhisper nodded and walked away, Amberpaw sticking her tongue out at Mousepaw as they left.

"It's okay, Mousepaw, you're still learning. Amberpaw wants to be

a skilled fighter, that's not your desire. Don't let her get to you."

Mousepaw shrugged, "I feel like sometimes I'm not fit to be a warrior."

"Of course you are!" Thistlestorm widened his eyes, "You're just taking a little longer to make sure you understand everything. You know what they say, slow and steady wins the race."

"Yeah, I guess," Mousepaw sighed as they walked back to camp.

~Chapter Thirteen~

[image]

~Half a moon later~

Of course the first day of newleaf started with a warm rain. The sky was dark and foggy, rain clouds clogged up the sky. It was a gloomy day, nothing much was going on.

Thistlestorm was ever so determined to watch his kits grow up into fine, young warriors. They were more than halfway to being an apprentice already. His own apprentice was doing fine as well. Mousepaw was determined to prove his siblings wrong, and he definitely proved Amberpaw wrong the other day.

They were practice fighting, and Mousepaw beat her! Whether or not Amberpaw was on her game, Mousepaw still beat her, and he has been boasting about it since. Longpaw was trained in other places besides the training hollow so the other apprentices wouldn't be as jealous or dwell too much on the fact.

Thistlestorm wondered what the future held sometimes. He even seemed to forget about the fact that NightClan existed. Thistlestorm imagined a peaceful future with Snowberry. Years from now when they would be elders, watching their kits perform as excellent senior warriors. By that time, their kits' kits' will have kits. If that makes sense.

Twigwhisper, Amberpaw, Pikeleap, and Bouncestep came through the entrance, flanking an all too familiar figure. Thistlestorm widened his eyes to see Owlstar, the BreezeClan leader that betrayed his own Clan. His head was dropped to the ground.

"I would like to see Nettlestar, please," he rasped.

Nettlestar stood in front of Owlstar. Nettlestar's eyes were narrowed, and his stance was braced, as if prepared for the traitor

to lash out at him.

"My...my apologies, Nettlestar," Owlstar rasped, "But NightClan would like to assemble all four Clans for a peace meeting. This meeting is at the abandoned Twoleg den, where RainClan has agreed for the meeting to be hosted there. Pebblestar has also agreed to attend this meeting."

Nettlestar curled his lip, "You expect me to believe you? You abandoned your Clan and family for this group of rogues and loners!"

Owlstar shook his head, tears in his eyes, "NightClan is different than I thought it was! You see these scars? I earned them just from training. They chose me to assemble the Clans, when little do they know that I'll be returning to my own."

Stoneheart growled, "I think I speak for Nettlestar when I say that we will not be attending this 'peace meeting'."

Nettlestar flicked his ear, "We will go, I want to make peace. The safety of my Clan is my first requirement."

"Yes, yes," Owlstar nodded quickly, "The meeting is at moonrise tonight at the abandoned Twoleg place."

"We will be there," Nettlestar flicked his ear, "Escort this tom to the edge of our territory."

Pikeleap, who was leading the patrol, nodded. The patrol turned around and took the former leader into the forest.

Thistlestorm couldn't believe it. There was no way Sal-inja could honestly try to make peace. Unless he somehow realized that it was all wrong? Maybe he had the wrong Clans? Maybe there were other Clans across the world that he was intending to get. Thistlestorm had to believe in this chance of peace, to keep his family and Clan safe.

It was close to moonrise, and Nettlestar was assembling the whole Clan. He believed everyone's ears should hear that they are safe. Plus, if no one was left at camp, who was there to be attacked?

Flowerstorm brought her whole entire herb stock wrapped in the largest leaf she could find. She was very confident about this not ending well, although Nettlestar kept telling her it'd be okay.

It took a while, but finally they made it to the abandoned Twoleg place. RainClan, GloomClan, and BreezeClan were there. Flowerstorm sighed in relief when she saw that the other medicine cats have also brought herbs. Thistlestorm looked around for Littlestorm, even though it was mentioned that he died at the last Gathering. Sparrowstep was GloomClan's new medicine cat. Their apprentices were on the brink of becoming warriors.

Sal-inja and Lion were on the top of a pile of rocks that had fallen from the den. The rest of their group was gathered at the base of the rocks. Thistlestorm sighed in relief when he saw Owlstar with his former Clan.

Sal-inja let out a yowl to start the meeting.

The Clan leaders were at the head of their Clans, they looked very noble in their positions. Nettlestar had put a cat in charge of rushing Blossomheart, the queens and their kits to safety if something happened.

"I have gathered you all here to acquire peace between all of us!" Sal-inja spoke, his voice silencing all others.

Thistlestorm looked around, making sure cats weren't coming from behind. He noticed that here, the trees were remarkably taller. The rain had slowed to a drizzle, but Thistlestorm still felt disgusted at his heavy pelt.

"Instead of killing you all, I have decided just to take in any of your warriors that want to live somewhere different!" Sal-inja gleamed at the Clans, "I will demonstrate on one of my warriors how we roll!"

"Crow! Former warrior of LightningClan, meet me in the middle."

The two black toms faced each other in the rain. The Clans were gathered in a circle, the two toms faced each other calmly.

"We take rules very seriously!" Sal-inja twitched his whiskers, "This tom here has betrayed his new home and family!"

Crow widened his eyes, "No I didn't! What do you mean?"

"You let Clan cats off our territory without teaching them a lesson!" Sal-inja started circling Crow.

The Clan cats started getting uneasy, they started shifting in their seats.

"More importantly," Sal-inja stared at Nettlestar, "He let them go without reminding them about the warrior code that they were betraying!"

Nettlestar growled, "What are you talking about?"

Sal-inja eyed Cavestar as well, "Maybe Crash would like to step forward and explain?"

Cavestar hissed, "Don't call Crashclaw that! He is a loyal warrior of RainClan."

"Is he?" Sal-inja laughed. He unsheathed his claws and sliced them across Crow's throat. The black tom crumpled to the ground. Gasps from the Clans rippled in the air. Shrieks and yowls of terror filled Thistlestorm's ears.

Sal-inja looked at Nettlestar and Cavestar, "Is he truly loyal? When he has a forbidden love with Featherwing?"

Nettlestar gasped and whipped around, he stared at Featherwing, who was pressing her kits against her in fear, "Pikeleap isn't the father?"

Flowerstorm hissed, "I knew it! None of those kits look like Pikeleap at all!"

Cavestar was cussing out Crashclaw on the other paw. Yang jumped in front of Featherwing, "You wouldn't dare exile her?"

Nettlestar darted his eyes between Yang and Flowerstorm, "No. I

wouldn't put innocent kits in danger. But Featherwing will be punished."

Cavestar looked at Sal-inja, "What are you getting at here?"

Sal-inja cackled evilly, his head dropped in laughter. His green eyes glowed in the night, "What am I getting at? You all just gathered here for your doom!"

~Chapter Fourteen~

Thistlestorm widened his eyes as he saw Pikeleap urgently take Blossomheart and Snowberry and Featherwing and the kits into a tree. He saw cats from other clans doing that too.

"NightClan!" Sal-inja's head rose, "Fight!"

He saw the cats of NightClan charge without a glint of hesitation. There wasn't a lot of them. Why was he still standing there in shock?

Stoneheart was yowling out to his Clan, "Disperse and fight!"

Slowly but gradually warriors started to charge into the fight. The medicine cats gathered in an area for majorly injured cats to come to them. Thistlestorm realized Oakclaw was with them. Oakclaw looked determined as ever, itching to fight, but he was probably just there to aid the injured to the medicine cats.

Thistlestorm unsheathed his claws into the ground, suddenly confident. The Clans could definitely win this! There was only around eleven cats that they were fighting. Eleven verses four Clans? There was no way.

Then, Thistlestorm was rolling in the dirt, the rain falling hard on the ground. He focused on his opponent. Panther. His old rival. No way would this she-cat fool him again.

"Just stay still," Panther purred.

Thistlestorm fought against her voice and lunged at her. Obviously surprised, Panther toppled underneath Thistlestorm's weight. The two of them together were a big ball of hissing fur. Thistlestorm felt claws meet his face. He yowled in agony and separated himself from his one-on-one with Panther. The wound on his cheek stung, the rain washing the blood away.

"You can't win this," Panther purred again.

"Why not? There's only eleven of you. Sure you're strong, but we have the advantage of outnumbering you," Thistlestorm curled his lip.

"Do you?"

Thistlestorm perked his ears as Sal-inja yowled again. Suddenly, a black fog covered the clearing. It stung Thistlestorm's eyes and burned his lungs. What he saw was horrifying. Dark Forest cats were emerging from the fog, their eyes glowing in the dark. Their claws glinted in the moonlight.

Then he saw Timberleap. His eyes were full of tears as he realized that the stars that lined her pelt were dark instead of light. She had finally succumbed to the darkness.

He saw hundreds of other StarClan spirits, no longer StarClan spirits. They walked in the darkness, their true form was lost.

"There are few StarClan cats left," Panther bared her teeth, "What will your pitiful Clans do now?"

Thistlestorm recovered from his shock and locked eyes with Panther, "I don't know."

"That's what I thought."

"But I'll start with killing you!" Thistlestorm lunged at her, claws outstretched.

His claws met her chest and she fell backward. Thistlestorm slashed his forepaws against her chest. Panther growled and kicked him off. Thistlestorm only allowed himself to stumble for a second. Panther stood there, waiting for him to make a move.

"It can be helpful in battle"

Panther was probably the equivalent of a small badger. Thistlestorm jumped over her, turned around and bit her leg. He kept his jaws clamped around her leg. She yowled and twisted

around, making him break loose. However, Thistlestorm was still able to dislocate her leg and tear out some flesh.

Panther tried to limp away, but Thistlestorm would not allow that. He ran over to her and jumped on her back. He stood up, but had her scruff in his jaws. He violently shook his head until Panther became unable to fight, dazed from the scruff-shake. Thistlestorm raised up on his back legs and brought all of his weight on his forepaws onto Panther. She screamed as he supposedly cracked her ribs.

"Please!" She rasped, "Have mercy! I can't harm anyone else in this state!"

A warrior does not need to kill it's opponent to win a battle, Rocktuft had once told him. Thistlestorm huffed and walked away.

Now there was no way the Clans would win.

Thistlestorm was able to fight off a few Dark Forest cats, he killed one of them successfully. The Dark Forest had brought torture and torment to the Clans for seasons. Killing a few won't hurt.

He looked behind him to see Pikeleap overwhelmed by Dark Forest cats. Thistlestorm raced towards them. He wouldn't see Pikeleap die too. Not him and Rocktuft. Once Thistlestorm was in range, he brought all of his weight down on one the cats. The cat crumpled and his spirit dissolved into the air.

The spirit next to him growled, "I knew you were too small to fight."

Thistlestorm raked his claws against the spirit's flank. The spirit growled and jumped at Thistlestorm. The other two dark spirits aided in tearing Thistlestorm apart. Thistlestorm yowled as he felt his flesh tear. The tom on top of him had his underbelly exposed.

The other two dark spirits would block the spirit on top of Thistlestorm from dodging. Thistlestorm growled and unsheathed his back claws and shoved them across the spirit's underbelly. The tom froze, his eyes wide, mouth open. Blood dribbled from the dark

spirit's mouth as his essence disappeared.

The other two were shocked and stopped attacking Thistlestorm, "He killed Branch! He killed Branch!" They ran away. Thistlestorm decided not to chase after them and went over to Pikeleap.

Pikeleap was in horrible condition. The reddish-brown tabby tom was on his side, panting, covered in deep wounds and scratches. Thistlestorm stared in astonishment as he realized the tom was smiling.

"I said I'd be there for Featherwing's kits," Pikeleap opened his eyes slightly and looked at Thistlestorm, "I lied."

Thistlestorm yowled, tears in his eyes, "Stop!" Thistlestorm grabbed Pikeleap by his scruff and hurriedly rushed him to the medicine cats. Several other Clan cats were already there.

"Flowerstorm, please! He's on the brink of death!" Thistlestorm yowled through fur.

Flowerstorm hurried over to Pikeleap, herbs in her jaws. Thistlestorm watched as she hurriedly applied herbs to his wounds. She was done within seconds, faster than he has seen any medicine cat apply herbs to wounds.

Thistlestorm watched as Pikeleap smiled one last time. Then the light left the tom's eyes.

"No!" Thistlestorm cried out, "No!"

He *would* end this, somehow.

~Chapter Fifteen~

[image]

Thistlestorm looked around desperately for his apprentice, Mousepaw. He twisted around and in between fighting cats. Finally, he spotted Mousepaw, Amberpaw, and Longpaw pressed up against a tree, an old, brown tom was blocking any means of escape.

The tom's tail flicked hungrily as he closed in on the apprentices, showing no intention of mercy. Thistlestorm tried to run towards them but was knocked over by a group of fighting RainClan and NightClan warriors. He was unable to reach his apprentice!

It was hard to see through the blur of fur, but he made out Mousepaw talking to his siblings. They nodded firmly and jumped to the old tom's flanks and slashed at them. Mousepaw took his claws and gripped onto the tom's muzzle. The old tom struggled underneath the weight of all three apprentices. Thistlestorm huffed as he was knocked down again, fur and blood covering his view.

Finally, Thistlestorm got out of the chaos and started racing to help the apprentices. A pale yellow tabby she-cat got in his way. He widened his eyes and realized that it was Larkstripe. Muscles rippled through her fur, her eyes glinted.

"Finally I can rid of you, Clan scum!" Larkstripe jumped at Thistlestorm quickly.

Unable to dodge, Thistlestorm fell, Larkstripe on top of him. Larkstripe lunged for his neck, but he rolled over just in time. Thistlestorm bit back a screech as he felt Larkstripe bite his tail and yank him back. He lost his balance and stumbled. Larkstripe pounced on his back and went for the killing bite.

Thistlestorm shut his eyes, this was how he was going to die?

A blur of white flashed in front of him. The weight on top of Thistlestorm suddenly disappeared. He heard a yowl of pain and

whimpering. Thistlestorm got up and turned around to see Larkstripe running for dear life. Whitescar stood in front of Thistlestorm, his tail flicking in irritation. The RainClan deputy turned to look at Thistlestorm.

"I got your back, kid," Whitescar nodded and darted off.

Thistlestorm breathed a "thanks" and remembered about the apprentices and that old NightClan tom! He looked over to them to see Mousepaw standing on top of the tom's body. Thistlestorm ran over to them.

Amberpaw and Longpaw were cheering loudly as Mousepaw kneaded the tom's flesh. Mousepaw opened his mouth excitedly when Thistlestorm approached.

"We killed him! We killed Scream!" Mousepaw yowled, exhilarated.

"Really? Just you three apprentices?" Thistlestorm chuckled approvingly, then he took notice of their wounds, "Go get fixed up! Then you can fight some more."

The three apprentices ran off to the medicine cats.

Larkstripe, Scream, and Panther were now beaten. That just left around eight more?

Thistlestorm yowled as a large, dark figure landed on top of him. He looked to see a long-furred, white tabby, tom engulfed in the darkness of the Dark Forest. His green eyes glowed with hunger.

"Moon!" Thistlestorm hissed and kicked his back legs. To his surprise, Moon rolled out of the way and pounced back on Thistlestorm, digging his sharp claws into Thistlestorm's skin.

Growling in pain, Thistlestorm kicked Moon, successfully this time. Moon landed a tail-length away, unbalanced. While Moon was unbalanced, Thistlestorm slid on his side underneath the Dark Forest tom. He unsheathed his claws and met the flesh of Moon's soft underbelly. Moon yowled, but Thistlestorm swiftly jumped back onto all fours. The tom yelped as he flew a few tail-lengths into the

air and fell.

Moon groaned and dissolved into the dark air.

That's right, Thistlestorm thought, disgusted. There was still the Dark Forest to take care of. Thistlestorm worked his way to the medicine cats. Well, Lurking Shadow and Sal-inja has to have some sort of alliance that is broken when one of them dies. Right? That would make sense. If Sal-inja dies, NightClan has no ruler and therefore the battle stops. The Dark Forest has no more reason to fight after that, and their strength drops. If Lurking Shadow died, the Dark Forest would have to evacuate the battle, leaving only NightClan left, which would mean an obvious win for the Clans.

Thistlestorm crouched next to Flowerstorm. He reluctantly ate gross herbs and allowed her to quickly apply cobwebs on his wounds.

Twigwhisper and Amberpaw were on their hind legs, their backs pressed together. Together, they were fighting off a few Dark Forest warriors. Nettlestar and Longpaw were fighting off a flame colored she-cat that belonged to NightClan. Then he saw Mousepaw, Rabbitpaw, Brackenpaw, and Slatepaw fighting a black and white spotted tom that also belonged to NightClan. Thistlestorm purred as he realized that the tom had no chance against four apprentices.

As Thistlestorm walked around, looking for a spot to participate in. Two young cats ran straight into him. Thistlestorm recognized them as Needle and Torch.

"Thistlestorm!" Needle yelped in terror, "Please, don't fight us!"

Torch nodded quickly, "We're trying to escape this battle!"

Tears formed in Needle's eyes, "Can we join your Clan?"

Thistlestorm stared at them, his eyes widened, "Join our side in the battle, worry about actually joining us later!"

The siblings nodded and sprinted back into battle, leaping on Panther, who was trying to hurt one of the Clan cats.

Suddenly, a light shined from a gap in the rain clouds. Thistlestorm looked up to see stars drifting down to the scene. He gasped as he realized that they were StarClan cats!

Thistlestorm saw an orange tabby tom, a sleek gray she-cat, a dark tom, and a cream tabby she-cat led them to the battle ground. Many StarClan spirits followed from behind.

The Dark Forest and StarClan clashed in the air as NightClan and the four Clans fought each other.

Thistlestorm had to rip his gaze from the war that was waging between light and dark when he heard Stoneheart yowl.

The fighting stopped. Everybody froze.

Thistlestorm shoved his way through the crowd and what he saw in the clearing brought tears to his eyes.

Sal-inja was standing over two dead leaders.

~Chapter Sixteen~

One of them, Thistlestorm realized with dread, was Cavestar.

The other, was Nettlestar.

Both of their bodies were torn by the claws of Sal-inja. Blood covered almost every inch of their fur. Nettlestar's eyes were a lifeless white. Cavestar's were closed.

"Two of your leaders are dead!" Sal-inja laughed, "What, oh, what will your Clans do now?"

Thistlestorm felt anger pulsing through him. His claws unsheathed into the ground out of sheer violence. He felt so vicious, that he was sure the feeling was pulsing around him like a bubble.

Sal-inja can't win this fight. He won't win this fight.

Thistlestorm won't allow it.

Thistlestorm caterwauled a battle cry and ran straight for Sal-inja. Surprised, Sal-inja toppled underneath Thistlestorm. The LightningClan warrior pinned down Sal-inja's shoulders and churned his back legs against his belly. Sal-inja hissed and threw his claws against Thistlestorm's muzzle. Growling in pain, Thistlestorm stumbled off his opponent.

"What are you doing fools?" Sal-inja called out to the frozen battle, "I'll easily take care of this *weakling*, fight!"

"I am *not* weak," Thistlestorm clenched his teeth together, blood drizzled down his muzzle, drops falling to the ground every moment and then.

"I haven't gotten injured this whole entire battle," Sal-inja laughed as blood dripped from his back, "Surprising you could lay a claw on me."

"I guess no one is as determined as me to claw your face off," Thistlestorm rumbled.

"Feisty," Sal-inja chuckled and lashed at Thistlestorm.

Thistlestorm ducked and dove under Sal-inja, he turned on his back and pushed up with brute strength. Sal-inja landed a bit away on all four paws. Thistlestorm forced his fur flat to make him look smaller, he arched his back for intimidation.

"Why do you want to so badly kill me?" Sal-inja fake-pleaded.

"You stole RainClan's territory," Thistlestorm jumped at Sal-inja, landing close enough to bite the dark tom's ear. Sal-inja growled and tore his head away. Thistlestorm huffed triumphantly as he had the tip of Sal-inja's ear in his mouth. He spat it out, "For every injury I give you, is payback."

Sal-inja breathed heavily, blood falling down his face.

Thistlestorm ran past Sal-inja, his claws unsheathed. They raked across Sal-inja's flank, he yowled.

"That was for manipulating my mate," Thistlestorm hissed.

Sal-inja lunged at Thistlestorm. Thistlestorm screeched and the tom put all his weight on Thistlestorm's throat, blocking his air flow. Thistlestorm kicked his hind legs against Sal-inja, but he didn't budge. Then he grabbed Sal-inja's head with his forepaws. Growling, Thistlestorm brought Sal-inja's head down and nipped at his muzzle. Sal-inja yowled and got off, pawing at his nose.

"That was for brutally training young cats," He flicked his ear.

Sal-inja stared, wide-eyed at Thistlestorm, "How are you able to hurt me? No cat, has ever been able to lay a claw on me since day one!"

Thistlestorm shrugged, and narrowed his eyes at Sal-inja, "Why do you hurt cats?"

Sal-inja flattened his ears against his head, "No one knows my

past! Nor would I tell someone outside my group!" Sal-inja pounced on Thistlestorm, digging his claws into Thistlestorm's throat.

Thistlestorm started to choke, blood rising up his throat and dribbling from his maw. Sal-inja grinned triumphantly as Thistlestorm felt the life start to leave his body. He tried to focus. There was no way he was going to die right here! He needed to avenge his leader, Pikeleap, and all those other cats that were murdered and injured!

Suddenly, Thistlestorm felt a surge of power. A starry form of a lion burst from him, it disappeared as quickly as it appeared.

Sal-inja stared in horror. Thistlestorm realized that they were both standing now, Sal-inja was a fox-length away from Thistlestorm.

Fight my son. I give you the power of LionClan.

Thistlestorm growled.

Sal-inja skidded, he sprinted off into the forest. Thistlestorm was on his tail. Sal-inja almost slipped as he quickly turned and leaped onto the bark of an incredibly tall tree. Thistlestorm jumped up on the tree. He had never been an amazing tree climber, but at least he was good enough to keep up with Sal-inja just barely. Thistlestorm looked down for a millisecond and realized with horror how high up they were.

He felt Sal-inja kick his face. Thistlestorm growled as his claws slid through the bark just slightly. Thistlestorm forced himself up, no matter how tired his limbs were. Then, the top of the tree was near. Soon, Sal-inja would have nowhere to go.

Thistlestorm's breath formed a cloud when he exhaled. He realized that they were above the clouds now. That was how high up they were. Thistlestorm was faintly aware of yowling coming from below.

Sal-inja kicked Thistlestorm's face again, but he didn't allow himself to budge. Sal-inja had nowhere to go now. Thistlestorm stretched his head and snapped his teeth on Sal-inja's tail. Sal-inja

hissed and almost lost his grip completely.

Sal-inja growled, "Your Clan was foolish to exile me!" He kept trying to repeatedly kick Thistlestorm down. Thistlestorm held on tight.

"Exile you?" Thistlestorm clenched his teeth, his head was aching.

"Ha! Yes!" Sal-inja huffed, "They exiled me for killing one of your siblings, Lionkit. Twigwhisper never told you that her own brother killed her kit?"

Thistlestorm widened his eyes, he had had a brother? Sal-inja and he...were related?

Sal-inja let go slightly and fell on Thistlestorm.

Thistlestorm lost his grip on the tree.

Yowling, Thistlestorm reached out in time and hooked his claws in Sal-inja's flesh. Sal-inja yelped as he was pulled into the air. The two of them slowly started falling.

Sal-inja desperately tried to twist in the air to survive the fall. Thistlestorm laughed, "This is the night that you fall, Sal-inja."

"Never!" Sal-inja yowled, his fur pulling up in the wind.

Tears formed in Thistlestorm's eyes.

Thistlestorm could feel his insides press against him. Gravity pulling him and Sal-inja closer to the ground.

Sal-inja yowled in the air. Thistlestorm quickly grabbed the dark tom and pulled him underneath him. Thistlestorm was on top, now he would have a cushion to break his fall.

Sal-inja had tears in his eyes too, "Nighthawk," he whispered.

Then they hit the ground.

~Chapter 17~

[image]

Featherwing screeched in horror as she saw Thistlestorm falling, Sal-inja slightly higher up. That was her brother! Her brother was falling!

Snowberry was balling, "Thistlestorm!"

Scorpionkit and Frostkit were whimpering, "What's happening? Why is Thistlestorm falling from the tree?"

Rainkit, Sootkit, and Ashkit just stared wide-eyed at the scene.

"Stay here, kits!" Featherwing instructed them. She darted into the forest and stuffed all the feathers and moss she could find into her mouth. She came back and laid them on the ground, hoping they would be enough.

Now Sal-inja was below Thistlestorm. Featherwing yowled, tears streaming down her face, "Thistlestorm!"

Then they hit the ground.

Sal-inja was laying lifeless. A couple of his legs were distorted, his spine was crooked, his facial expression frozen in horror. He had deep wounds that were no longer bleeding.

Thistlestorm looked no better. A few of his legs were bent backward, his spine was also crooked. But Thistlestorm looked like he was sleeping. Featherwing cried out and ran over to him.

"Thistlestorm! Thistlestorm, please!" She buried her head into his fur.

Snowberry just crouched in horror, her flanks heaving as she cried.

Scorpionkit tugged on her fur, "Is Thistlestorm okay? Is our dad okay?"

Snowberry dreadfully looked at her kits, "Dad...Dad is in StarClan now," she choked.

They looked at her in terror. The kits became a fit of tears and whining to go "wake him up". Featherwing couldn't believe it. How could StarClan do this to her? Tear the only family she was close to away from her? Thistlestorm was her brother! How could they...

The battle was still raging. Featherwing sniffed and picked up Thistlestorm by his scruff. She slowly dragged him out into the clearing. Snowberry was close behind, Sal-inja in her jaws. The kits heavily waddled behind them.

"Look!" One of the cats shrieked.

"Sal-inja is dead?"

"Thistlestorm!"

The Dark Forest faded from the scene, leaving the once StarClan cats behind. StarClan spirits walked over to the corrupted ones and touched noses, sending light through their bodies. Finally, StarClan was restored.

But her brother was dead.

In silence, all the Clans gathered the dead in the clearing. They all sat around them, mourning their loss. Featherwing named them all.

Thistlestorm from LightningClan

Willowfoot from LightningClan

Mothsplash from BreezeClan

Cavestar from RainClan

Nettlestar from LightningClan

Oakclaw from RainClan

Bramblenose from GloomClan

and

Tigerdusk from GloomClan

They mourned the rest of the night.

In the morning, the dead bodies were taken to their camps to be buried.

Featherwing and Snowberry and Yang dragged Thistlestorm's body to the graveyard. They dug his grave in silence. They laid his body in there.

Featherwing sobbed, "Thistlestorm you were...my brother. I can't believe StarClan took you away. You were such an amazing fighter. Your life saved all the Clans," Featherwing laughed, "I hope you don't trip in StarClan. Please, come visit me or something."

"My mate," Snowberry meowed, "You saved me when I was a little over six moons old, being trained brutally by those horrible cats. I traveled with you, I planned with you. I've lost so many friends. At one point my loyalty was torn. I almost killed cats, and I did kill Gorsestorm. Yet, you forgave me. I love you so much, I wish you a safe journey to StarClan."

They pushed the dirt back into the grave until it was covered. Featherwing lay a flower down on the grave and then they walked back to camp.

Stoneheart, now Stonestar, didn't know who to make deputy. He told the Clan that he had originally planned on naming Thistlestorm deputy. But now Thistlestorm was gone. He asked Twigwhisper, but she shook her head, saying she was going to retire soon. Yang said the same. He believe Bouncestep didn't have the right skill set, same goes for Yellowgaze. He was going to name the apprentices as warriors, for their bravery in the battle, but they'd be too young!

Then, Needle and Torch came in.

The cats hissed at their appearance.

"What are you doing here, NightClan rat-dung?"

Stonestar greeted them, "Why do you come here?"

They shuffled their paws. Needle spoke up, "NightClan dispatched after the battle. We have nowhere to go. We took your side in the battle. We hated being with them."

"Did you?" Stonestar flicked his ear.

They nodded.

Featherwing noticed that Snowberry was staring at them.

Snowberry ran over to them and faced Stonestar, "Please let them join! They're my lost brother and sister!"

Needle and Torch gasped.

"Snowkit?" They asked together.

"Nightkit and Treekit, my siblings," Snowberry looked at them, tears in her eyes.

"Very well," Stonestar rumbled, "Needle and Torch, you are now Nightwing and Treefur. We welcome you as warriors of LightningClan!"

Their names weren't chanted, but they were okay with that.

Short chapter! Sorry ;0

~Chapter Eighteen - Bonus Chapter~

No Specific POV ~

~2 Moons Later~

The Clans took a while to get sorted out, but finally, they are all organized and fixed. Warriors have recovered from wounds and shock, and proper burials have been held for the fallen

In LightningClan ~

Featherwing and Snowberry returned to warrior duties

Longpaw, Amberpaw, and Mousepaw are now warriors named as Longwhisker, Ambersong, and Mousefoot

Stonestar made Nightwing deputy a day after her arrival and she promised to take on an apprentice as soon as possible

Featherwing and Snowberry's kits are now apprentices:

Ashpaw's mentor is Nightwing

Sootpaw's mentor is Bouncestep

Rainpaw's mentor is Longwhisker

Scorpionpaw's mentor is Mousefoot

Frostpaw's mentor is Ambersong

Yang and Twigwhisper have retired to the elder's den

Featherwing is temporarily punished to apprentice duties for having a forbidden love

The tree that Thistlestorm fell from has been renamed as Thistle's Tree and is the tallest tree that the Clans know. It is now a part of apprentice training, where they learn to climb trees and hunt among them. However, apprentices are not allowed to climb higher than the first branch. The first branch is about two dozen fox-lengths high

In RainClan ~

Whitescar became leader as Whitestar

He assigned Crashclaw as his deputy

Crashclaw is temporarily assigned to apprentice duties as well for punishment for having a forbidden love

Brackenpaw, Slatepaw, and Rabbitpaw, became warriors and are named as Brackenstep, Slatefur, and Rabbitfoot

In GloomClan ~

Ravenpaw, Smokepaw, Shadowpaw, and Bumblepaw became warriors and are named as Ravensong, Smokestreak, Shadowpelt, and Bumbleface

In BreezeClan ~

Owlstar was taken in and resigned to an elder

Foxpaw and Hollypaw became warriors and are named as Foxskip and Hollywing

NightClan is finally gone ~ The Clans were safe

For now

END OF ARC ONE